











Massachusetts,



THE  
BAMPTON LECTURE  
FOR THE YEAR MDCCCXL.



AN INQUIRY INTO THE CONNECTED USES OF  
THE PRINCIPAL MEANS OF ATTAINING  
CHRISTIAN TRUTH

IN

EIGHT SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

AT THE

BAMPTON LECTURE

FOR THE YEAR MDCCCXI.

---

BY

EDWARD HAWKINS, D.D.

PROVOST OF ORIEL COLLEGE, AND PREBENDARY OF ROCHESTER.

---

OXFORD,

JOHN HENRY PARKER :

B. FELLOWES, LUDGATE STREET, LONDON.

1840.



TO THE  
HEADS OF COLLEGES  
IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
THE  
FOLLOWING SERMONS  
PREACHED BY THEIR APPOINTMENT  
ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY  
INSCRIBED.





EXTRACT  
FROM  
THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT  
OF THE LATE  
REV. JOHN BAMPTON,  
CANON OF SALISBURY.

---

— “ I give and bequeath my Lands and Estates  
“ to the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the Uni-  
“ versity of Oxford for ever, to have and to hold all  
“ and singular the said Lands or Estates upon trust,  
“ and to the intents and purposes hereinafter men-  
“ tioned ; that is to say, I will and appoint that the Vice-  
“ Chancellor of the University of Oxford for the time  
“ being shall take and receive all the rents, issues, and  
“ profits thereof, and (after all taxes, reparations, and  
“ necessary deductions made) that he pay all the re-  
“ mainder to the endowment of eight Divinity Lecture  
“ Sermons, to be established for ever in the said Uni-  
“ versity, and to be performed in the manner following:

“ I direct and appoint, that, upon the first Tuesday  
“ in Easter Term, a Lecturer be yearly chosen by the  
“ Heads of Colleges only, and by no others, in the  
“ room adjoining to the Printing-House, between the  
“ hours of ten in the morning and two in the after-  
“ noon, to preach eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, the  
“ year following, at St. Mary’s in Oxford, between the  
“ commencement of the last month in Lent Term, and  
“ the end of the third week in Act Term.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight Divinity  
“ Lecture Sermons shall be preached upon either of  
“ the following Subjects—to confirm and establish the  
“ Christian Faith, and to confute all heretics and schis-  
“ matics—upon the divine authority of the holy Scrip-  
“ tures—upon the authority of the writings of the  
“ primitive Fathers, as to the faith and practice of  
“ the primitive Church—upon the Divinity of our  
“ Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity  
“ of the Holy Ghost—upon the Articles of the Chris-  
“ tian Faith, as comprehended in the Apostles’ and  
“ Nicene Creeds.

“ Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight  
“ Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be always printed  
“ within two months after they are preached, and one  
“ copy shall be given to the Chancellor of the Univer-  
“ sity, and one copy to the Head of every College, and  
“ one copy to the Mayor of the city of Oxford, and one  
“ copy to be put into the Bodleian Library; and the  
“ expense of printing them shall be paid out of the  
“ revenue of the Land or Estates given for establishing  
“ the Divinity Lecture Sermons; and the Preacher  
“ shall not be paid, nor be entitled to the revenue,  
“ before they are printed.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that no person shall be  
“ qualified to preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons,  
“ unless he hath taken the degree of Master of Arts at  
“ least, in one of the two Universities of Oxford or  
“ Cambridge; and that the same person shall never  
“ preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice.”

## PREFACE.

---

HAVING thought it right to undertake the Bampton Lecture for the present year, at the desire of some of those in whom the appointment of the Lecturer is vested, expressed to me on the eve of the election in 1839, I had scarcely an alternative as to the subject. My other engagements seemed to preclude my embarking upon any subject, to some portion of which at least my thoughts had not been previously directed.

But I had more than once endeavoured to invite attention to a part of the subject of the following Sermons, and particularly in 1819, in a short Dissertation upon the Use and Importance of what I ventured to entitle *Unauthoritative Tradition*, as an *Introduction* to the Christian Doctrines. My immediate purpose at that time was to meet a religious Difficulty, which I had not indeed experienced myself, but which, I knew, occasioned considerable pain to many minds,

arising, as they supposed, out of the Indirect teaching and Unsystematic form of the Christian Scriptures. And the solution of the Difficulty turned upon a Principle of very extensive application respecting the connexion between the Church and the Scriptures, and the method of employing them both, according to the intention of their Divine author, in order to the attainment of Christian Truth. There was nothing new, indeed, in the principle. It is, on the contrary, precisely that which almost all Christian Parents constantly, though perhaps unconsciously, pursue in the communication of religious truth to their children. And yet it is often denied and opposed ; and the true theory has not been always kept sufficiently in view, even where it has been practically observed. This principle, accordingly, I have endeavoured to unfold in the following Discourses, and, further, to throw it into its proper place in the consideration, generally, of the PRINCIPAL MEANS which have been afforded to US FOR THE INVESTIGATION AND ATTAINMENT OF THE TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL.

There is a disadvantage, however, which I may request the reader to bear in mind, attending the discussion of any complex subject in a Lecture of this description. As the separate portions were to be treated in a limited number of distinct Discourses, designed for oral delivery on separate occasions, they required to be formed each of them into something like a whole, and the effect of statements may often appear too strong and decided, whilst they seem to stand alone, when in fact they are modified and counterbalanced by other connected portions of the entire work.

And indeed the prosecution of my design has opened an extended field of inquiry, and has led me over not a little controverted ground, which on many accounts I might have wished to avoid. It so happened, that about the time when I originally wrote upon this subject, it had been a good deal considered in Ireland by the late Mr. Alexander Knox, and some of his friends ; and although I agree with him in many of his views, yet I cannot always acquiesce in the terms in which they are

stated<sup>a</sup>. And subsequently in this country, and in this place, as is well known, various questions connected with it have been very earnestly pressed upon the public attention; and they have been often handled in a manner, which, with great respect for the writers, and even concurrence in their leading objects, I can still less approve. For controversy, indeed, I have certainly no leisure, and, I hope, no inclination. But having found my own words and arguments sometimes employed to forward conclusions, to which I think they do not properly lead, and which appear to me exaggerated or incorrect, I have supposed it to be little less than my duty to endeavour to point out the inferences to which they legitimately tend. Any thing, therefore, which I shall say will I trust be regarded as rather the continuation of what I had begun to treat before controversy arose among us, than as an endeavour to enter the lists of debate. At all events, I have persuaded my-

<sup>a</sup> See Remains of A. Knox, Esq. vol. iii. p. 289 et seq. Second Letter to I. S. Harford, Esq. on the Fathers of the Christian Church, and on Catholic Antiquity.

self that I am not seeking Controversy, but pursuing Truth. And I venture to hope that, under the Divine blessing, the Lecture may answer its intended purposes, as they are described in the introductory and concluding Discourses, and even when I may have fallen into error myself, may yet point out to others the path to Truth.

E. H.

*Oriel College,  
June 24, 1840.*





# CONTENTS.

---

## SERMON I.

Page 1.

John xvii. 17.

*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

### INTRODUCTORY.

Subject stated. Inquiry into the Nature and connected Uses of the Principal Means of attaining Christian Truth.

Page

I. Importance of Christian Truth. 1. Not all religious questions important, or of equal importance. 2. Yet Christian Truth important, generally, and as to particular doctrines.

6

II. Of the Principles assumed in the following Inquiry, viz. 1. Christian Truth Revealed. 2. The Revelation Completed by Christ, and His Apostles; 3. who were, therefore, Inspired. 4. The Word of God altogether, or almost all, contained in the Canonical Scriptures.

20

## SERMON II.

Page 35.

2 Thess. ii. 15.

*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*

ON THE COMBINED USE OF THE SCRIPTURES AND THE CHURCH.

I. Indications in the New Testament that the Christian Scriptures were not designed to be by themselves Introductory to Christian Truth. 1. All the books addressed to Christians previously instructed in the faith. 2. Provision for oral teaching in the first age; 3. and in succeeding ages. 4. The New Testament indirect and unsystematic. Page  
38

II. Observations. 1. The Scriptures and the Church together, two of the principal means of attaining Christian Truth. 2. The Church to state, introduce, suggest, doctrines, the Scriptures to prove them. 3. The proof of doctrines affected by this combination; 4. but no Defect imputed to the Scriptures, nor any thing asserted against their Sufficiency. 53

## SERMON III.

Page 67.

2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

*Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

## CONTENTS.

xv

### THE OLD TESTAMENT HOW FAR INTRODUCTORY TO THE NEW.

	Page
I. Indications that the Old Testament, although preparatory to the Gospel, is not the natural Introduction to the Christian Doctrines, exhibited in 1. The Historical Scriptures. 2. The Law. 3. The Psalms and Prophets.	71
II. Application. 1. The Old Testament to be read by Christians under the light of the Gospel. 2. Instance, in the doctrine of the Atonement.	89

## SERMON IV.

Page 105.

Matt. xxii. 41—45.

*While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son.*

### THE USE OF THE SCRIPTURES AND THE CHURCH IN COM- BINATION, AS TO DOCTRINES, EXEMPLIFIED IN THE INSTANCE OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

I. The Church offers, 1. an Unauthoritative Introduction to the truth; 2. Presumptive arguments in its favour.	108
II. Hence, 1. the Disposition with which we should approach the Scriptural proof of the doctrine; 2. Suggestions as to the mode in which the proof should be examined and applied.	122
Scripture to be imitated in the practical application of the doctrine.	141

## SERMON V.

Page 145.

Tit. i. 5.

*For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.*

THE USE OF THE SCRIPTURES AND THE CHURCH IN COMBINATION, AS TO ORDINANCES AND INSTITUTIONS.

	Page
I. More committed to the Church with respect to Ordinances, &c. than with respect to Doctrines ; a less amount of Scriptural proof, superadded to universal practice, sufficient to establish the divine authority of Institutions and Ordinances.	150
II. This principle exemplified in the case of, 1. the Lord's day ; 2. Infant-baptism ; 3. Episcopacy.	155
This no argument in favour of tradition of Doctrines. Practical distinction between this kind of proof and others.	178

## SERMON VI.

Page 183.

2 Cor. i. 24.

*Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.*

CHURCH-AUTHORITY AND CHURCH-PRIVILEGES.

I. Church-authority, that of Order ; or of Influence ; or Absolute. No absolute authority proved to belong either to, 1. the Church existing ; or, 2. the Primitive Church, whilst supposed to be One and Catholic.	189
II. What degree of authority to be ascribed to the doctrines of the Church, by virtue of, 1. her Indefectibility ; 2. the maxim, Quod ubique, quod semper, quod et omnibus. 3. Tradition.	201

III. Privileges derived from Church-authority, (viz. the authority of Influence,) whether that of, 1. any Particular Church ; 2. the Universal Church.	Page 211
--	-------------

## SERMON VII.

Page 221.

1 Cor. xiv. 20.

*In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*USE OF REASON AND JUDGMENT IN ORDER TO THE  
ATTAINMENT OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

I. Abuses of Reason. 1. Rationalism. 2. Views of Christian Evidences &c. akin to Rationalism. 3. Unrestrained Speculation. 224

II. Use of Reason and Judgment, as to, 1. The Evidences of Christianity, Canon of Scripture, &c. 2. Scripture, and Interpretation of Scripture ; 3. Christian Antiquity. 235

III. Aids of Reason, and safeguards against its abuse ; Spiritual assistance ; the Judgment of others ; Intellectual culture ; Moral and Religious training. 255

## SERMON VIII.

Page 263.

1 Cor. ii. 14.

*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

## ILLUMINATING GRACE.

I. The Grace of Illumination. 1. Doctrine of Revelation concerning the Holy Spirit. 2. His offices. 3. Abuse of Grace (Enthusiasm). 4. Absolute necessity of the aid of the Holy Spirit in order to the attainment of Christian Truth. 264

	<i>Page</i>
II. All the Means of Truth to be employed in combination, and in due subordination of the less to the greater. 1. Recapitulation. 2. Conclusion. The Holy Scriptures the best means for Progress, not in Theology, but in genuine Christian Truth.	287

## S E R M O N   I.



St. John xvii. 17.

SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH : THY WORD IS  
TRUTH.

So far as the gracious prayer of our Lord related to the eleven Apostles, it has, doubtless, been fulfilled: but if the spirit of His supplication comprehended also, as He presently intimated, all those “ who should afterwards believe on Him through their word,” what period of the Christian history has hitherto witnessed its accomplishment? Eighteen centuries have rolled away, and we are even now debating, What is Christian Truth, Where it is to be found, and How it is to be attained.

Yet in fact the prospect of agreement in the Truth would be even more remote, if we were *not* at variance about the means by which it should be pursued. Unanimity may not be hopeless, when these shall first have been ascertained;

but we cannot expect to arrive at the same termination of our journey, when we do not tread in the same or at least converging paths. And not a few, perhaps, and those very quiet and humble efforts must yet be made, before Christian inquirers shall learn to acquiesce in the same or similar methods of attaining to Christian Truth. Mighty instruments are employed from time to time for great purposes; Athanasius, Wiclif, Luther, Cranmer :—too often, however, have great minds become the authors or occasions of great errors; whilst truth has been advanced quietly and silently by far inferior powers. Though the sound of the axe was heard where the cedars fell in Lebanon, all was noiseless and still where “the house of the Lord was in building<sup>a</sup>.” Or, however, be these things as they may, we must work each of us in his own appointed sphere, humbly and patiently, no one expecting that his work shall be perfect, nor desirous to hear the echo of his labours, or to witness their success.

In the humble hope, accordingly, of being permitted to contribute a little, though it be but a little, towards the ultimate advancement of Truth and Unity, I shall endeavour in the following Discourses to inquire into the **PRINCIPAL MEANS OF ATTAINING CHRISTIAN TRUTH; INTO**

<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings vi. 7.



THEIR NATURE, AND VARIOUS USES, AND MORE ESPECIALLY THEIR USES WHEN THEY ARE COMBINED TOGETHER.—Not with any vain expectation of saying what has not been said before, still less of discovering any new method for the attainment of Truth; but desirous only of addressing useful suggestions to the wants and circumstances of my brethren in the present age, for every successive period has its own peculiar exigences, and of directing attention, which is always a profitable and a grateful employment, to that variety of resources, with which we have been endowed in order to the reception of revealed truth, in their harmonious and intended *combination*.

Such an attempt will assuredly be furthered by your favour and your prayers. There is nothing in this world which you so earnestly desire as the promotion of Christian Truth, with all its legitimate fruits of holiness and piety, charity, and unity. If harsh expressions occasionally fall from pious lips, whether in speaking of unbelievers or of those Christians abroad or at home who do not altogether agree with the Church to which we belong, deeply as such expressions are to be regretted, they are not so much indications of an uncharitable spirit, as of an earnest zeal for the extension of the Church of Christ, and the advancement of His truth.

They proceed upon what is unquestionably true, and ought never to be kept out of sight, that religious errors, schisms, and heresies, are continually ascribed in Holy Scripture to a perverse and rebellious principle within us, nay even to the suggestions of our spiritual adversary<sup>b</sup>. We may hope, nevertheless, with a very learned and zealous advocate for the truth, “that there is more folly in the world than malignity, more ignorance than positive infidelity, more error than heretical perverseness<sup>c</sup>.” But if this be not the state of the case, and so far as it is not, how much more cause for the most intense desire for the removal of error!

Even the man of this world, in the spirit of enlightened benevolence, ardently desires to relieve the sufferings and depression under which so many of the children of our common parents are yet labouring; to clothe and instruct the savage, liberate the serf, enfranchise the slave, nay even in a land of freedom and civilization to cheer and elevate the condition social, moral, intellectual, of those who toil in our mines, or in our ships, the peasant and mechanic, the poor

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xiii. 18—23. John iii. 18—21. viii. 47. x. 24—27. 1 Cor. i. 18—31. 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. vi. 3—5. 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. iii. 1—7. iv. 3, 4. 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. Gal. v. 18—21. Jude 19.

<sup>c</sup> Bp. Horsley's Letters in reply to Dr. Priestley, Letter xvii. p. 320. Ed. 1812.

and the oppressed. And his aim is right and good. But what is time to eternity? What is any misery or degradation, merely temporal, compared with guilt and sin, and that spiritual darkness, whose influence extends over countless ages and into another world? And yet it is too true, (the greater are our sin and shame,) that the powers of darkness still hold triumphant sway over the far greater portion of the earth; millions of our fallen race are still the slaves of Satan, delight in the cruelties and impurities of Heathenism, cling to the sensualities of the False Prophet, scorn and abhor the cross of Christ. And it is not merely the sloth and weakness of professing Christians which protract the reign of error, but their unchristian lives and sad dissensions obstruct the progress of the Truth. The very Heathen observe our schisms and our open sins; and the Jew is confirmed in his disobedience by our offences. And still, even in Christian countries the most highly favoured, Christian Unity is broken without remorse, and, not to speak of Infidelity and Profaneness, open or secret, serious Errors are maintained in a spirit of proud independence, and gross delusions, and superstition, and idolatry itself, find but too many votaries. It is impossible but that the sincere and earnest Christian, if no unhappy circumstances have made him blind to the Importance of Christian Truth, must desire above all things

to extend the blessings of a sound and enlightened Faith. It is his daily prayer. And he knows also that it is the gracious will of "God our Saviour," that "all men should be saved, and should come unto the knowledge of the truth;" and he desires with the beloved Apostle to know "no greater joy" than that all his brethren should "walk in the truth"<sup>d</sup>.

I. The sincere Christian, it was said, must earnestly desire the removal of error, if no unhappy circumstances render him blind to the IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH. But here, unhappily, we are met on the very threshold of our inquiry by one of the sad consequences, in part at least, of our misconduct and dissensions. Even Christians are led to doubt or to underrate the importance of Truth itself; to acquiesce perhaps in some vague general profession of Christianity, slighting, or mistrusting, or resisting any more particular and exact statements of Christian doctrine.

It is not merely the flippant unbeliever who detects with acute dexterity the various errors and ignorances of contending philosophers, and thence infers that Truth is unattainable, that all we can know is only this, that we should love God and love man. Nor is it the shallow

<sup>d</sup> 3 John 1—4. 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.

journalist alone who decides dogmatically, that “Christianity is a moral influence derived from certain facts; and whosoever receives the facts, may, if he will, enjoy the doctrine.” He “prefers, therefore, to define Christianity to be the reception of the life and character of Jesus, as moral facts. All Christians agree in this, and it is enough.”—The truth is, and we must not conceal it from ourselves, that not a few acquiesce to a certain extent in sentiments of this character. Even the earnest and inquiring mind of Locke was for a time deceived into them—we shall have occasion as we proceed to notice the source of his error, and happily he lived to discover and discard it himself—but for a time he also contended, that the only truth which Christians were concerned to know and confess was, that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God. Less inquiring minds, meanwhile, are in various ways beguiled into these vague misconceptions of the Truth. They are conversant perhaps with the different professions of belief in different Christian countries; they observe good and estimable men in every Church or sect; and they either conclude that religious Truth is of little importance, or infer from the variety and contrariety of religious opinions, that Christian Truth cannot with any tolerable certainty be attained at all. And even at home, when men direct their thoughts—and how can they avoid directing

them?—to the sad conflict of opinion upon numberless questions of religion in our own Church and nation, they are exposed to similar dangers. They are tempted so to pursue Charity as to sacrifice Truth; to doubt whether there is any clear and direct path to Christian Truth; to suspect from the very difficulty of attaining it, that it was not even designed to be generally attained; to conceive that whatever be our religious opinions or errors, Sincerity is all in all; or to dream of some general comprehensive profession of Christian doctrine, in which all our religious differences may be sunk and lost.

A few observations upon this subject will suffice for our immediate purpose.

1. In the first place, indeed, we may readily admit, nay it is highly necessary to observe, that very many questions, supposed to be connected with Christian Truth, are utterly *unimportant*; and worse than unimportant, frivolous, curious, irreverent, perhaps, and profane, overstepping at once the limits of Revelation, and of the faculties of the human mind.

In Abyssinia, we are told, nothing is so common as to dispute about the two natures of our Lord Jesus Christ: and endless questions about the manner of His anointing, whether He can be said to receive the Holy Spirit, whether his unction can be termed a birth, in what exact

sense He is the first-born among many brethren, these and similar questions divide the Church into separate sects, excommunicating and anathematizing one another.

And if I have recourse to Abyssinia for one or two examples which may be neither disputable nor invidious, let it not therefore be imagined that these are the errors merely of the uninstructed. They are rather the besetting dangers of the ingenious and refined. "Inveni," says Stapfer, "in Theologi cujusdam celeberrimi systemate ultra nonaginta solum de Christi personâ distinctiones." None so likely as the subtle Theologian to fall into the mistake, and a most injurious mistake it is, of investing his own unauthorized speculations with the sacredness of the divine subject out of which they arose.

Again, it should be admitted with respect to such questions as are quite legitimate, and not without importance, that they are by no means all of them of *equal* importance. There are subjects connected with religious truth, which are not properly parts of it. And desirable as it might be, perhaps, that we should be agreed upon every question, there are some upon which we may disagree without any ill effect upon genuine Christianity. And yet the points of *least* importance have been sometimes, unhappily, the occasions of the most bitter dissensions.

That the Churches of Christ, for example, should celebrate the Feast of Easter in remembrance of His resurrection was most desirable; that the day should be every where the same was of little consequence; yet what memorable disputes have there been about the time of the celebration! It is important that we should have Ministers of the Word and Sacraments, but those who were perfectly agreed about the Christian Ministry, its orders, and succession, have eagerly contended about the Clerical Vestments. It is most important, so at least we have “learned Christ,” that we should disbelieve the doctrine of Purgatory, and believe in the Sacrifice of our blessed Saviour; but even at this day we meet with acrimonious contentions, between those who are not in the least at variance upon these great subjects, about the exact condition of departed spirits, and the divine or human origin of the Patriarchal sacrifices—interesting questions, no doubt, and connected with those momentous subjects, yet not themselves, of necessity, affecting Christian Faith.

And into this comparative importance of religious questions, it behoves Churches as well as individuals to inquire with all earnestness. I would venture to name as an instance in which this consideration has been lamentably neglected, the Westminster Confession of Faith, unhappily adopted by the National Church of Scotland,



and imposed not only upon her Ministers, but upon many at least of her Lay-members<sup>c</sup>. Its peremptory decisions upon the most disputable questions, and not essential to the faith of Christ, however acceptable they may be to the minds of some, will never surely obtain the assent of many others; and their general enforcement can scarcely fail to become the fertile source of hypocrisy or scepticism.

Still further it may be conceded,—it is at least a point which if we could not prove, we do not doubt,—that *Sincerity*, even amidst religious error, will meet with due allowance at the judgment-seat of Christ. But what sincerity? not surely that of the careless and indolent and uninquiring, but of those alone who after diligent use of their best advantages, and not only of some but of *all* their advantages, have yet unhappily failed to ascertain the truth. This, I say, we do not doubt, though we might be unable to prove it; for it is most important to observe, that the sacred Scriptures make but little and occasional mention of Sincerity in error, whilst they speak largely and constantly of Truth and Faith.

## 2. Turning then from these admissions to the

<sup>c</sup> See the Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. ix. p. 117—134. (May 26, to June 7, 1690.) vol. xi. p. 402. (January 16, 1707.) And the Act of Union, 5 Anne, c. 8. §. 10.

actual declarations of Holy Writ, we find the Importance of Christian Truth written as with a sun-beam throughout the volume of the New Testament.

“ To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world,” says our blessed Lord, “ that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. I am the way, the truth, and the life.” “ For the law,” said St. John, “ was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ<sup>f</sup>.”

Again, the truth which God revealed, it was the duty of man to believe. Faith and Truth were correlative. Our pardon, acceptance, life, salvation, depended upon our belief of the Truth. Thus the forerunner of our Lord, “ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” And our Lord Himself, “ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And His Apostles, “ To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remis-

<sup>f</sup> John xviii. 37. xiv. 6. i. 17. 2 John i. 23. 3 John i. 3, 4, 8.

sion of sins.—Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.—As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.—These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name<sup>g</sup>.”

Yet again, our belief of the Truth was to be an operative principle, and to be manifested by its fruits. Faith was to work by love; and to overcome the world and the flesh. Hence such expressions as “obedience to the faith,” “obeying the truth;” and more particularly, “This is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment.—Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.—Every man that hath this hope in Him,” of seeing Christ hereafter, “purifieth himself, even as He is pure.—Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God<sup>h</sup>?”

<sup>g</sup> John iii. 36. 14—17. Acts x. 43. xvi. 31. John i. 12. xx. 31.

<sup>h</sup> Rom. i. 5. Gal. iii. 1. Eph. i. 13, 15. 1 John iii. 23. 18. 19. 3. v. 4, 5.

And these expressions sufficiently illustrate the more general language of our Saviour, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—free, namely, from the slavery of sin; and in the text, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth<sup>1</sup>." For it appears even to demonstration from these passages, confirmed, as every reader of the Scripture knows them to be, by very many more, that our blessed Lord did not come into the world merely to do and suffer something on our behalf, nor simply to exhibit "an ensample of godly life," but to disclose some truth or truths—and these, assuredly, not confined to rules of conduct, most of which were known before; nor to ritual observances, those which were appointed by Him or His Apostles being remarkably few and simple—but some truth or truths which it was of the very last importance that all his disciples should hear, and believe, and receive into their hearts as the very principle of their life on earth, and the foundation of their hopes of heaven.

Did, then, the *facts* of our Saviour's life, and these alone, constitute the truths of Christianity? or was the whole of Christian Truth wrapped up in some general confession that Jesus is the Messiah, that He is Christ, the Son of God? These are the questions that remain.—But it seems quite impossible that we should acquiesce

<sup>1</sup> John viii. 32, 34, 35. xvii. 17, 19.

in the conclusions to which they tend, if we advert for a moment to the leading subjects of what the Church of Christ has received, and teaches as the doctrines of the Gospel. They are such that we cannot escape from them, or pass them by; we must consider and understand them, we must reject or accept them.

For example, we have received, and every Christian has received, and almost every Christian has admitted, as a great elementary doctrine of Christianity, that Christians have a peculiar promise of Divine assistance; that, as an act of inexpressible condescension and favour, the Almighty no longer manifests His presence among his chosen people by outward symbols, the flaming glory, the pillar of a cloud or of fire, but dwells among them, and within them, by His Holy Spirit, making His abode invisibly, but really, in His Church, and in the hearts of its members, in order to their holiness, and "obedience to the faith."—Is this doctrine true, or is it not? If true, it must be a part of that truth of Christ which we must know, and receive, as a subject of our prayers, an object of our gratitude, a principle of our life. It is vain to talk of Christianity as "a moral influence derived from certain facts." It is through our acceptance of the truth set forth in this doctrine, that we shall become capable of receiving that influence, or enabled to act upon the truth. Nay we must

not only know this particular truth, but know something also, not indeed technically, but practically, of some of the questions connected with it; as whether Grace is bestowed instantaneously and once for all, and irresistibly, or the reverse; and whether or not it is imparted to us through our use of certain appointed Means. But if this be true of the doctrine of Sanctification through the Holy Spirit, it will be no less true of any other doctrine of equal importance.

Or to take another and a very practical example. It is plainly possible that the faith and uniform practice of the universal Church till within the last three hundred years may have been well founded; and that as under the old Covenant a particular mode of admission into it was expressly appointed, and Infants were received by it within the pale of the elder Church, so likewise under the new the method of admission may be definite and prescribed, and our Lord may have intended to suffer even little children to come unto Him, and be received into the Covenant by that appointed rite. Where then is the considerate Christian parent who will regard such an inquiry as unimportant? will deem it a light matter to trifle with the eternal interests of his child? and, by any hasty adoption of a Theological conclusion, to deprive, possibly, an immortal soul committed by an inscrutable

Providence to his care, of restoration to the favour of his Heavenly Father, and a covenant-title to everlasting glory?—If it be only possible that the doctrine of the Church respecting Infant-baptism may be true, it is certain that it must be important.

Let us advert only to one instance more. Not of course that every instance must not be superfluous to all or very nearly all who hear me; yet is it the part of the well-instructed Christian, and more especially of the Christian minister, not to confine his regards to his own spiritual necessities; and the Founder of this Lecture evidently designed that, although addressed in the first instance to this congregation, it should be adapted also, if possible, to the circumstances of other minds. Let us briefly advert, therefore, to the instance of that general confession which has appeared even to reflecting and able men to supersede every more particular statement of Christian doctrine, the confession, namely, that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.”

And doubtless there was a time when the confession of this truth was all-important. Hence the frequent mention of it in the New Testament, and especially in the Gospels; nay, and the mention of it in terms so emphatic, and so exclusive, that, if they were to be regarded only by themselves, it might well appear to be the only confession required from the Christian

believer. I have given instances of the fact already. For it was indeed the very rock upon which the Church of Christ was to be founded. At that time it expressed a belief, hardly to be attained by Jew or Gentile, that Jesus of Nazareth was the predicted Messiah; those who made this profession of their faith knowing in part, and waiting to understand more perfectly, the nature of the Messiah's office, character, kingdom<sup>k</sup>. But the question for us, and which we cannot evade, is, What do *we* understand by this confession? We must attach some meaning to the words "Messiah," "Son of God." Nay we cannot avoid connecting with these expressions some of those statements of Christian doctrine, whether to receive or to deny them, which are the most keenly controverted. Do we mean, then, that the Son of God came upon earth to teach us certain new truths, to assure us of the resurrection and immortality, to die as our example, to be our future Judge—or, besides and above these truths, that He died for our sins, that He is the Mediator between man and God, our Advocate, Intercessor, our Divine Redeemer? It is plain that the whole character of our religion, our duty to Almighty God, our gratitude to Him, our reception of Salvation and

<sup>k</sup> See this point well treated in Mr. Veysie's Bampton Lecture, Sermon vii. p. 204, &c.



the means of securing it, the very character of our daily worship, its piety or its profaneness, turn upon these different senses of one expression. It is idle to say that the question whether the Son of God is or is not Divine, and is, consequently, or is not the proper object of our adoration, is unimportant, a mere question of learned or curious speculation. Daily, and oftentimes in every day, it forces itself upon our attention. Not unnaturally or unreasonably has it been deemed to be of such transcendent interest and importance, that those who acknowledge the Divinity of our Lord are regarded by their opponents as well nigh degrading Christianity into Heathenism, those who deny it are scarcely if at all admitted to be Christians. For the point at issue is, in a word, whether our worship of our Redeemer is piety or blasphemy, a duty or a sin.

There are some Christian doctrines, then, or doctrines alleged to be Christian truths, the very reverse of curious, frivolous, unimportant, or of secondary importance; even doctrines of deep and vital importance to us all. Not without reason have Divines spoken of Fundamental truths, and of Fundamental errors; truths directly essential to the doctrine of the Gospel-covenant, errors directly subversive of it. Some Christian truths there certainly are of which it is

written, “ he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned<sup>1</sup>.”

But if there are some Christian doctrines of this supreme importance, these also have often been, nay they are at this very day, the subjects of the most eager dispute. How shall a plain man ascertain the truth? This is the question to which it will be the object of the present Lecture to suggest the proper answer, by presenting a general sketch of the nature and uses, and more especially the combined uses, of the principal means with which God has blessed us in order to the attainment of Christian Truth.

And the remainder of this Introductory Discourse shall be devoted to a brief consideration of a few positions, which by the general acknowledgment of Christendom may be regarded almost as Axioms, preliminary to the proposed Inquiry.

II. For it is almost universally admitted by professing Christians, First, That Christian Truth is no discovery of human reason, no perfection of philosophy, but A REVELATION from Almighty God. Secondly, That the PROPHETS having prepared the way, this Revelation was

<sup>1</sup> Mark xvi. 16. Matt. x. 32, 33. Luke xii. 8—10. John xii. 47, 48. Rom. x. 8—17.

finally completed by JESUS CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES. Thirdly, That, whoever was commissioned to reveal the truth was in order to this end INSPIRED, or had power to declare to man THE WORD OF GOD. And, lastly, that the greater part of this Revelation, that is to say, every thing, or nearly every thing, which it is necessary for us to know and believe, in order to salvation, is contained, either expressly or by implication, in the CANONICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that Christian Truth, in its most extensive acceptation, will comprehend every truth of religion which a Christian ought to believe; including, for instance, the doctrines of the Existence of God, and of His Attributes, of Creation, and Providence. And thus we might be involved in the old debate respecting the origin of our knowledge of divine things, and the office which Reason may have sustained in suggesting some of them. Practically, however, an inquiry into the means of attaining Christian Truth will relate almost exclusively to the doctrines more immediately connected with Redemption and Sanctification, the Christian Covenant, and the divinely appointed Means of Grace; which alone are the subjects of dispute, and which, if admitted to be true, will be admitted to be truths of pure

*Revelation.* With this qualification, accordingly, the first of the four principles already stated will, it is probable, be universally allowed. And the others, and especially the fourth concerning the Rule of Faith, have been so guarded and limited, that although some individuals and a few inconsiderable sects would not absolutely and altogether assent to them, they would be admitted, probably, by every National Church, and even by the Church of Rome.

Mere truisms, indeed, they may rather appear to some, who may be disposed to ask to what end or use are positions so undeniable laid down at all. But the nearer they approach to truisms, the greater is their practical value. Devoutly were it to be wished, that there were many other principles which we might thus be permitted to treat as data almost universally conceded, and so proceed to the consideration of their consequences, and of truths more or less immediately connected with them, but not as yet so generally acknowledged.

And of no slight importance are the consequences which flow at once from these acknowledged principles. As, for example,—

1. Do we admit, that *to Christ and His Apostles, and to these alone*, after the inspired Prophets, it was committed to reveal the truths of the Gospel?—Then, what an important line of demarcation

is thus drawn between these inspired teachers, and all who have succeeded them! We reverence the Fathers, for example, study their admirable writings, and recommend the study to all whom we can influence; and we do well. The Fathers, nevertheless, belong to a class of Teachers altogether distinct in this respect from the Apostles; they were not commissioned to *reveal* any one Christian doctrine whatsoever. Let us attach what value we may to the venerable remains of Christian Antiquity, and very highly are their use and value estimated by the most capable and candid judges, still the Interpreters are not the Authors; they whose office it was to witness, preserve, unfold, or hand down the truths of Revelation, must be cautiously and reverently distinguished from those whom the Almighty appointed to reveal them to mankind<sup>m</sup>.

2. In like manner when we acknowledge that the Apostles were *inspired*,—and they could not but have been inspired if they were commissioned to reveal the truths of God, truths undiscoverable by human reason,—it follows that such Inspiration was distinct from every other kind of

<sup>m</sup> “ Patres libenter amplector, et recipio: doctrina enim ex veteri memoria plena antiquitatis, plena dignitatis existit: sed recipio patres, ut ipsi jubent se recipi, hoc est, si contineant se in sua ditione, et non migrent in possessionem verbi Dei.” Roger Ascham, quoted by Bp. Van Mildert, Bampton Lecture, Sermon iv. p. 294. Appendix.

spiritual assistance denoted by this word. This will not be denied by those who are forward to speak of many others as inspired, as the Septuagint Translators of the Hebrew Scriptures, for example, or the compilers of our own Book of Common Prayer, nay, and certain even of the Heathen Philosophers, as Socrates and Plato. Doubtless we speak, and not improperly, of “the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,” with reference to any of His most wonderful, although ordinary and accustomed, gifts and graces bestowed upon the members of Christ. And the writers alluded to desire only to magnify the goodness of God in aiding and controlling the efforts of some of His creatures in order to the good of others, whether within the Church of Christ, or even without it. I regret their use of language, and deplore its apparent tendency to confuse our apprehensions of sacred things, and depreciate the proper inspiration of the sacred writers. Yet that is not their intention. Nor would they by any means deny, that the words of those who are inspired in order to the actual revelation of Divine Truth have pretensions and an authority exclusively their own.

Some, indeed, will be found in every age beguiled by vain pretences to special inspiration and new revelations from on high. And rarely may we hope to undeceive those who are willing to be deceived, who are impatient of the control

of reason, and give the rein to a distempered imagination. But this is a different question. Such persons would not of course admit the principles which we have here assumed. But they form after all an inconsiderable exception to the general mass of believers. And we are not merely entitled, but obliged to demand, that their pretensions shall be accredited by what have ever heretofore been the credentials of Revelation, prophecy or type or miracle, and if not thus accredited to pass them by.

3. Or to revert to the first of these acknowledged principles.—We admit that Christian Truth is matter of direct *Revelation* from Almighty God.—But if so, with what profound reverence should we approach it, with what deep gratitude should we receive whatever He has thus condescended to disclose to His poor creatures! He has endowed us with Reason, and doubtless we should employ His gift in ascertaining the fact of a Revelation, the authenticity of the written records of the Divine Word, and their correct interpretation; but no sooner have we thus ascertained the revealed doctrine, than Reason bids us not presume to sit in judgment upon it, but receive it with implicit veneration. Nay, upon the high and heavenly subjects with which Revelation is conversant, Reason teaches us even to expect disclosures which, far more than in the

case of earthly knowledge, shall be only in part within the limits of our present faculties; not indeed contradictory to Reason, but above and beyond it, running up into mysteries inscrutable, indistinct visions of the things in heaven, then only to be fully known when we shall have put on immortality, and walk in the full light of heaven<sup>n</sup>.

Or if this shall to any one appear doubtful, it will at least be admitted to be consistent with the plain dictates of Reason, that, a Future Life being confessedly the end to which the Christian Revelation directs our view, and Holiness evidently the revealed path to Happiness, we cannot hope to know the truth which God would reveal to us, if we are not disposed to do His will;—that, again, if He has blessed us with several distinct means of ascertaining the Truth, we are but too likely to misapprehend it, if we wilfully slight any one of them;—that, above all, if our Maker has offered to us His especial aid, under certain conditions, in order to a correct apprehension of revealed truth, that truth will be dark and veiled to those who decline his gracious offer.

Again, if Christian Truth is, exclusively, Truth of Revelation, then by the very terms of the hypothesis nothing which is not revealed can compete with it or intrude into it. Carry the

<sup>n</sup> See Bp. Butler's Analogy, part ii. chap. iv.



authority of the Church to the utmost, yet any declaration or decree of hers as to matter of doctrine, say, the Decree of a General Council, is either a revealed truth, or an expression or explanation, at least, of a revealed truth, or it is nothing. If by having admitted her Infallibility we are debarred from inquiry into the ground of her declarations, yet there was a time when inquiry was supposed, and when through the medium of Scripture or of Tradition it was supposed to be shewn that such Decree expressed a Truth of Revelation, or it was nothing. Leo X. himself, when he anathematized that position of Luther, "*Certum est, in manu Ecclesiæ aut Papæ prorsus non esse statuere articulos Fidei,*" asserted the authority of the Church not to reveal a new doctrine, but only to declare, of course infallibly, a doctrine already revealed. And those who do not recognize her Infallibility will therefore scrutinize the foundations of her most authoritative Decrees.

Some of these conclusions it will be right to open more at large hereafter; yet they appear to be involved in the elementary position, that Christian Truth is Truth of Revelation.

4. Lastly, when we assert that the greater part of the Christian Revelation, every thing, or nearly every thing, which it is necessary for Christians to believe in order to salvation, is

contained expressly or by implication in the *Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament*—we may appear perhaps to set forth a principle somewhat too vague to be of great moment; yet does this also involve truths of the greatest practical importance.

Seldom, perhaps, are we sufficiently alive to the extraordinary blessing we enjoy in the almost universal acknowledgment of the authenticity of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Amidst all the unbelief around us, and numberless dissensions within the Church of Christ, the authority of the Canonical Books of the Old Testament, maintained even by the most determined adversaries of the Christian faith, is almost if not altogether undisputed; whilst those of the New Testament, with very few and those for the most part transient exceptions, have been received with one consent by every Christian community. Even the sad disputes of Christians on every other subject corroborate the authority of these sacred Books. It is a signal instance, in a word, in which the elder Church and the Church of Christ, whatever their transgressions in other respects, have done their duty, and have handed down to us an undisputed inheritance of the highest possible value.

Then as to the Rule of Faith, the Sufficiency of these sacred Books, their Supreme Authority, if the principle, as a principle, appears to be

confined within too narrow limits, its practical effect nevertheless is very extensive.

Those, for example, in our own communion, who enlarge upon the general value of Tradition, do not however, so far as I am aware, found any doctrine upon it. It is to be regretted that expressions have been used tending to depreciate Scripture, whilst they would exalt Tradition. Yet if any one has indulged in fond expectations of hereafter recovering through the medium of Tradition some forgotten fragment of the revealed word, his real employment of Tradition, nevertheless, is only as subsidiary to Holy Scripture. And if there are Protestant writers, who do not appear to acknowledge in terms that the Scriptures are the only Rule of Faith, they are not in reality opposed to this important tenet. When they speak, for example, of "Scripture and Antiquity, or Scripture and the Creed attested by universal Tradition," as the Rule of Faith, or assert in so many words, that "Scripture and Tradition taken together are the joint Rule of Faith," they do not intend, however, to deny "the supreme authority of inspired Scripture," but would distinctly acknowledge that the Scriptures are the one sole foundation, proof, and standard of doctrine. And the too great similarity between their language and that of the Church of Rome arises, perhaps, in a great degree, from an indiscreet en-

deavour to bring into one and the same definition both the Test of sound doctrine, which is Holy Scripture, and one of the Means of ascertaining the true sense of Scripture.

Nay even the Romanist, when he formally asserts the doctrinal authority of the Apocrypha, or maintains that “unwritten Tradition is equally with Scripture a rule of Faith,” does he practically employ his principles to any large extent?—In the spirit of opposition to the principles of the Reformation, the Church of Rome was unhappily induced, fifteen centuries after the commencement of Christianity, to introduce these novel dogmas into her creed : but even the Council of Trent endeavours to press Scripture into the proof of some of those doctrines which we controvert ; and sometimes, when the Council appeals expressly to Tradition, the appeal is made to it not as a distinct source of doctrine, but as preserving or interpreting the doctrines of Scripture : whilst popular writers of the Church of Rome labour to borrow aids from holy writ in proof of other controverted points, Indulgences, the Invocation of Saints, the honour due to Relics, for which no attempt was made at Trent to discover Scriptural support<sup>p</sup>. As the sure test and proof, meanwhile, of all these leading articles of Christian doctrine, which are equally received

<sup>p</sup> See Dr. Wiseman’s Moorfields Lectures, Lect. xii. xiii. vol. ii. p 73, 102, 103, 120, 121.

by them and by us, and by all the Churches of Christ, neither they, nor we, nor any other Christians, have any need to appeal to any authority save that of Holy Scripture. All Christians, for example, who hold the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, believe that they can establish every article contained in them by sufficient proofs derived from the Scriptures alone. And there are few Romanists, probably, who would refuse to say with Bellarmin, *Illa omnia scripta sunt ab Apostolis, quæ sunt omnibus simpliciter necessaria ad salutem.*

Practically then, with whatever qualifications, in order that the principle might not be opposed to the views even of the Church of Rome, we have asserted, that the Canonical Scriptures are the depository of Christian Truth, the principle is nevertheless of very extensive application. Numerous questions, it is true, will still remain, even after the admission of this and of all the positions which have just been stated; fruitful fields of controversy respecting the Sufficiency of the Scriptures, the extent to which their authors were Inspired, the means and method of Interpreting them, Private judgment, Church authority—and some of them must of necessity claim our attention in the progress of the present Inquiry—but above them all, the great truth of the majesty of Holy Scripture stands preeminent, like some bold cliff above the dark and restless

waters, some tall mountain at whose feet rolling mists and clouds are gathered, but the light of heaven is upon its brow. Should any thing which I may hereafter presume to offer in the next or succeeding Discourses appear to any one, but for a moment, derogatory to the supreme authority and inexpressible value of the Inspired Scriptures, the impression, I humbly trust, will be but transitory. My aim and endeavour, and earnest prayer to the Divine Author and Finisher of our Faith will ever be, that I may be permitted to aid the endeavours of my brethren in the attainment of Christian Truth, under a deep conviction and grateful sense of the ineffable value of Holy Scripture, assuredly believing, that through the truth of God we must be sanctified if we would inherit heaven, and that as the personal Word that was “made flesh and dwelt among us,” so likewise His inspired and written word, is Truth<sup>a</sup>.

And it will be the part of piety and charity in you, my brethren, to pray with me and for me, and for yourselves also, and for those who may at any time join with us in this Inquiry, that the Holy Spirit may fill our hearts with a sincere and fervent love of the Truth, and the word of

<sup>a</sup> Sermo Evangelii non falsus est, ut Pseudoprophetarum dicta, non falso admixtus, ut Pharisæorum ut Philosophorum dogmata, sed pura ac puta *veritas*. Grotius in Joh. xvii. 17. apud Crit. Sacr.

God ; that both I may preach and you may hear with singleness of heart and a candid spirit, not seeking our own glory, nor the praise of men, to please or to be pleased, drawn aside neither on the right hand nor on the left by the spirit of party, neither studious of novelty, nor of antiquity, nor of any other thing, but only Truth,—as men who know well, and earnestly aspire after *the end*, looking to that Heaven “whither the forerunner is for us entered,” even Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Redeemer.

Now unto Him, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed all honour, and praise, and glory, and thanksgiving, for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning ; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.





## S E R M O N    I I.

2 Thess. ii. 15.

THEREFORE, BRETHREN, STAND FAST, AND HOLD THE TRADITIONS WHICH YE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT, WHIETHER BY WORD, OR OUR EPISTLE.

ONE extreme opinion ever tending to produce its opposite, the Biblicists, or purely Scriptural Divines, as they considered themselves, of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, setting themselves in array against the mischievous subtleties of the Scholastic Divines, the unscriptural refinements of a speculative reason, abjured the aid of Reason and Philosophy in the investigation of sacred truth<sup>a</sup>. Many of those who in later times, and especially from the Reformation to the present day, have valued themselves upon the title of Scriptural Christians, have agreed with their predecessors in striking off one of the aids

<sup>a</sup> See Mosheim, Eccles. Hist. Cent. xii. part ii. ch. iii. §. viii. Cent. xiii. part ii. ch. iii. §. vii. viii. (vol. iii. p. 92, 249, 251.) and Bp. Vanmildert's Bampton Lecture, Sermon iv. p. 87. Notes, p. 290.

which they might have enjoyed in order to the attainment of truth, but by quite another process. Advocates of Reason even to a fault, but much more the advocates of Independence and Individual Judgment, these have been carried away mediately or immediately by a strong reaction against that extreme assertion of Church-authority by which Christian liberty and truth were long oppressed, and, rushing into the opposite extreme, have deprived themselves in their search after truth of the genuine uses of the *Christian Church*.

But whilst we hear so much of the “ Religion of the Bible,” and of “ God’s word” as opposed to human creeds and human teaching, it is exceedingly remarkable, that not only the history and circumstances of the various books of the New Testament, but their very form and structure, tend to establish an opposite conclusion. Instead of the Christian Scriptures excluding human teaching, they imply it; instead of teaching Christianity in the first instance, they are addressed to Christians previously instructed in the faith; instead of being composed after the manner of works designed to impart the rudiments of knowledge, they are indirect and unsystematic: thus even of themselves going far to negative the assumed propriety of an independent study of this sacred volume, and to demonstrate the use and, in general, the need of human

uninspired teaching, in conjunction with that of the inspired word of God.

To many of my hearers, indeed, this argument has of late years become so familiar, that this brief allusion to it might be thought sufficient ; but in truth, on several accounts, we ought every one of us to be well acquainted with it. For it involves principles of frequent and extensive application, yet not always sufficiently observed even by well-instructed Theologians ; and, perhaps, the argument itself has not in every instance been very carefully employed. But, what is of greater moment, whilst we believe that multitudes of our brethren walk in error, some in very grievous error, partly in consequence of their expecting to find in the Bible what it was not intended to supply, we may reasonably hope, that an argument of this kind founded upon the Scriptures, and not merely upon particular expressions, but upon their general form and character, will be candidly entertained by sincere disciples of the Scriptures. Nay, and it has also been found capable of relieving from painful difficulties some whose belief accorded with our own : and few can have stronger claims upon our sympathy, than those who labour under any serious Religious Difficulty, from the very fountain of joy and hope deriving pain and doubt and perplexity.

I. On various grounds, then, I would request your attention to some of the INDICATIONS AFFORDED BY THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES, THAT THEY WERE NOT DESIGNED BY THEMSELVES TO SUPPLY THE PROPER INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN TRUTH—first adverting to the Facts of the case, and then to some of their more natural Consequences.

1. Thus it is obvious, as has been already mentioned, that all the several books of the New Testament were addressed *to Christians*, and *presuppose an acquaintance with Christian doctrine*.

The first verse of almost every Epistle states the fact. They were addressed, for example, “to all that were at Rome called to be saints, whose faith was spoken of throughout the world;” “unto the Church of God which was at Corinth;” “unto the Churches of Galatia;” “to the saints which were at Ephesus—at Philippi—at Colosse—unto the Church of the Thessalonians;” by St. Paul, again, to Timothy, Titus, Philemon, his “own sons in the faith;” by St. Peter to those who were “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;” to those, again, who had “obtained like precious faith with him through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” by St. John

to the “elect lady and her children,” or to “the well-beloved Gaius whom he loved in the truth;” by St. Jude to “them that were sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.”

Several of these Apostolical addresses at once imply, that the great foundations of Christian truth were, or were supposed to be, familiar to these Christian converts. And if in a very few cases the fact that an Epistle was addressed to Christians does not appear on the face of the superscription, it is presently implied in the clearest terms: as by St. Paul calling upon the Hebrews as “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ;” by St. James, “My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons;” by St. John, “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin<sup>b</sup>.”

So obvious, indeed, and incontrovertible is the fact, that the *Epistles* were all addressed to Christians already instructed in the faith, that Mr. Locke, adverting to this fact, and assuming that *some* books of the New Testament must have been designed to *teach* mankind, in the strict sense of the word, the great first truths of

<sup>b</sup> Heb. iii. 1. James ii. 1. 1 John i. 7.

Christianity, concluded that the *Four Gospels* must have this design. And hence the serious error in which for a time he acquiesced. But the Historical Books were equally with the Epistles addressed to Christians; and to those Christians, for the most part, according to the well-known accounts usually received among us, who had previously enjoyed the benefit of the personal ministry of the several Evangelists. But, waiving external testimony, we find it expressly stated, that the Gospel of St. Luke was written to Theophilus, in order that he “might know the certainty of those things *wherein he had been instructed.*” Examine the other Gospels, and their object, although not thus declared in so many words, will be found to be of the same kind. Whilst the Acts are only a continuation of the Gospel of St. Luke, and addressed to the same person.

2. But, again, all the several books of the New Testament being thus addressed to Christians, and implying some previous instruction in the faith, *the Teachers also were at hand by whom it should be supplied.*

“Hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our Epistle.” Here we plainly recognize two distinct sources of instruction, the *oral* and the *written* teaching of the Apostle;—not, of course, any instruction

derived from “ Tradition,” in the technical sense of that word; “ traditions” in this place simply meaning the truths which St. Paul had delivered to the Thessalonians, and that very recently, their conversion having occurred only the year before;—but the Thessalonians are distinctly referred to his *oral* as well as to his *written* instructions.

And what took place in Thessalonica, took place also at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and in every other scene of the Apostle’s labours. Every where he taught the Christian truths partly by word of mouth, partly by his Epistles. And the same method prevailed, we cannot doubt, in all the other Churches planted by other Apostles; prevailed, in a word, throughout the Universal Church, of which these several congregations were so many branches.

For a time, indeed, perhaps for fifteen or twenty years after the first preaching of the Gospel, it does not appear that any instructions were communicated to Christians in writing. And after this period, twenty years and more elapsed before the various books of the New Covenant were all composed; and a much longer space of time before they were all received by every branch of the Church. The Christian Church, in short, was planted and flourished antecedently to the very existence of the Christian Scriptures.

It is somewhat remarkable perhaps, that, with the single exception of the Revelation of St. John<sup>d</sup>, we have no record of any divine appointment under which any one of the books of the New Testament was composed. But whilst under the direction of the Holy Spirit, silent and unobserved, the admirable structure was gradually reared, no man at first perceiving the harmony of its parts and the just proportions of the whole; Evangelists and Apostles often appearing to have little further aim than to meet occasional emergencies, compose dissensions, solve difficulties, obviate errors, or bring back their sacred instructions after their decease to the remembrance of their disciples;—very different, meanwhile, was the care openly employed in providing for continual *oral* instruction in every Church. In every instance where the Gospel was planted, a *Society* was also established; Teachers were appointed; and, in addition to those strong natural and religious obligations by which Christian parents and Christian masters are required to teach the truths of salvation to their children and households, over and above all this, express provision was made from the very first for the religious instruction of the whole community, by the selection and appointment of *Ministers of the word*. What their various orders, and what their other functions, we need not at present inquire. It is evident, and it is written,

<sup>d</sup> Rev. i. 11.



that among the offices of the several orders of the Christian Ministry were these—to “give attendance to reading, exhortation, doctrine,” to “preach the word,” to be “apt to teach,” to “labour in the word and doctrine,” to be “ministers of the new covenant, ministers of the Gospel.”

3. Yet again, it is equally evident, that express provision was also made for *a continual succession of Christian Ministers* to preach the word in every Church and to all conditions of men. And this, it should be observed, not merely before the completion of the Christian Scriptures, but afterwards.

“The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses,” writes the Apostle Paul to the first Bishop of the Ephesian Church, “the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” No one will suppose that similar injunctions were not equally addressed to all who held a similar station: but this passage occurs in one of the latest of the Epistles, written after the completion of the whole volume of the New Testament, with the exception only of the Gospel of St. John, and his Epistles, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Revelation—

\* 1 Tim. iv. 13. v. 17. iii. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 24. iv. 2. Tit. i. 9. 2 Cor. iii. 6. Eph. iii. 7. Acts vi. 4, 10. viii. 5, 35, 40.

† 2 Tim. ii. 2. cf. 1 Tim. iii. Tit. i.

that is to say, for all the purposes of this argument, (since these are not the writings, certainly, to supply elementary instruction introductory to the rest,) this continual succession of Christian Ministers was appointed after the Christian Scriptures were complete.

To object that the office of the Minister is not exclusive, is to add strength to my conclusion. Doubtless the sacred obligation is binding upon all men, to spread the knowledge of religious truth according to their several relations and opportunities. The Author of nature, and of our being, prescribes the duty. It was a duty before the Law, and under the Law, and how much more under the Gospel<sup>g</sup>? Christianity not only adopts this general obligation, but heightens and extends it<sup>h</sup>. But then, evidently, the more we acknowledge the duty and importance of private and domestic teaching, the more observable is the special appointment of the ministerial orders for public as well as private teaching and catechising. We find a great natural provision for religious instruction, growing out of the very constitution of our nature, and the methods by which Divine Providence has appointed that we shall be born, reared, educated, and distributed

<sup>g</sup> See Gen. xviii. 17—19. Deut. vi. 7, 20. Exod. xii. 26. xiii. 14. Josh. iv. 6, 21.

<sup>h</sup> See Rom. xiv. 19. xv. 2. Eph. iv. 29. vi. 4. 1 Thess. v. 11. Tit. ii. 10. 1 Cor. vii. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 1.

into the various relations of social and domestic life; we find Christianity adopting, and enforcing the obligation to teach what we have been taught, which flows from these providential arrangements; and yet, in addition to all this, we find our Lord and His Apostles setting apart and consecrating within the Church an express Institution for the Ministry of the word, and careful provision made for the continuation of this Institution to all succeeding times.—Striking intimations these of an original design and intention, that oral instruction, the teaching of men, uninspired men, should introduce or accompany the study of the written word.

4. Granted, however, that the facts adverted to afford strong presumptions in favour of the use of the Scriptures and the Church in combination, it does not follow that the New Testament, or parts of it, might not be so clear and elementary, so copious and complete, as to supersede the necessity of additional instruction, whether introductory or explanatory. Certainly not. But the fact, I apprehend, is otherwise. The fact appears to be, that the structure of these writings accords with the circumstances under which they were composed, and that they are, to a considerable extent, *indirect and unsystematic*, especially in the more doctrinal portions as if they were neither adapted, nor

designed, by themselves to suggest or introduce the doctrines of the Gospel.

I am perfectly aware, that this is a question of much delicacy, and not very easily determined ; that different minds will view the same facts under different lights, some at once admitting the indirectness and want of system thus ascribed to the New Testament, others denying their existence altogether.

None indeed will dispute the occurrence of local and partial difficulties ; since even an Apostle describes “some things” in the Epistles of St. Paul as “hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction<sup>i</sup>.” But that is not the present question. There might be occasional difficulties amidst great general clearness. Our position respects the general indirectness and unsystematic form of the Christian Scriptures as indications of the usefulness, and even general necessity, of uninspired human teaching to precede or accompany the study of the inspired word. If our Romanist brethren would readily admit the fact, very many Protestants, and some great Divines among ourselves, strenuously deny it. “All those things which concern the terms of man’s salvation,” they affirm, “are delivered in the Scriptures with the greatest evidence and perspicuity.”—“Of the true

<sup>i</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 16.

sense of plain texts every one may be certain, and for obscure ones it is not necessary every one should.”—“ All controversies that arise about faith are either not at all decidable, and consequently not necessary to be believed one way or other, or they may be determined by Scripture. In a word, all things necessary to be believed are evidently contained in Scripture, and what is not there evidently contained, cannot be necessary to be believed<sup>k</sup>.”—In this summary manner have Stillingfleet, Tillotson, Chillingworth, and other Divines, disposed of the question; the great *clearness* of the Scriptures being a point continually insisted upon, sometimes in proof of their general excellency, more frequently as an argument against the pretensions of an Infallible Church.

Never may we be found in any way extenuating or depreciating the excellency of the Scriptures! Let facts, nevertheless, be stated as they are; and let us not be found, however unwittingly, to “ talk deceitfully for God!” But if every important doctrine were indeed so plainly and directly delivered in the Scriptures, what place were there for the unhappy doubts and disputes concerning them? Or how could the want of

<sup>k</sup> Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae*, b. iii. c. vi. §. 8. “ The excellency of the manner wherein things are revealed in Scripture in regard of clearness.” Tillotson, *Rule of Faith*, part ii. sect. iii. §. 8. Chillingworth, *Religion of Protestants*, &c. c. ii. §. 12. 84. 156. iii. §. 81. iv. §. 40—44. vii. §. 56, 57. See note at the end.

systematic and direct teaching in the Scriptures have been urged as an objection against them? Or, which is much more important to our purpose, how could sincere believers, even within the pale of the Church of England, have laboured under painful doubts and difficulties in consequence of the inconsistency which they discerned between the structure of the New Testament and what they supposed to be its office?—Yet so it has been. Believers have inquired not captiously, but in sincerity, Why are so many important articles of faith rather implied than taught in the Christian Scriptures? Why have we to gather them from mere incidental notices in books written on particular occasions, controversies, heresies, some of them long since passed away and but obscurely connected with the circumstances of later times? Natural and proper as such a method of writing may have been in the first age, how is it adapted to our own? With whatever advantages of other kinds it may be attended, what advantages can compensate for the absence of clear, distinct, definite instruction in saving truth? And have not the results of such a method been, in too many instances, either painful perplexity, or serious error? Why then, they ask, all this hazard and difficulty, when more direct and systematic statements might have been with equal ease put forth by the same authority, and would have been received, by believers in the inspired volume,

with implicit veneration?—Nay, perhaps, occasionally their minds have been even overcast by the clouds of scepticism, and the distressing doubt has suggested itself, Whether after all it can be of vital importance to believe in any doctrine not to be collected without so much difficulty from the sacred writings.

Now it is not of course intended that the existence of any perplexities of this kind proves the point in question. But they deserve great consideration; and more consideration than those general assertions, already cited, respecting the plainness of Scripture. The question, meanwhile, is a question of fact, and should be investigated in the Scriptures themselves.

But in the conduct of such an investigation, we must especially consider the need there commonly is for an extreme simplicity and clearness in the primary communication of knowledge. The greater the experience of the instructor, the more alive he becomes to this necessity. Little do we sometimes suspect of what important truths those who listen to our Sermons, and join in our public devotions, will remain uninformed, when they have not enjoyed the advantage of distinct elementary instruction. What then if they were to derive all their knowledge of Christian doctrine only from an independent study of Holy Writ!

If, again, we have enjoyed the benefit of early instruction, introductory to the Scriptures, we

shall now have to regard them under a totally new aspect. And it may require some effort of mind to throw ourselves into the position of persons searching the Scriptures, in the first instance, for those elements of Christian doctrine, which we did not ourselves derive originally from the sacred writings, but from the lips of Parents and Instructors; to distinguish, consequently, implications and allusions, from direct assertions and declarations; and observe the natural effect of passages taken separately, which we have been taught to combine; or the just force of those very texts in teaching or suggesting doctrines, which we have hitherto found so clear in proving, illustrating, or enforcing them. No single texts, for example, are so frequently adduced in support of the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, as the form of Christian Baptism appointed by our Lord and the Apostolic benediction of St. Paul<sup>m</sup>: yet the latter appears to some minds even inconsistent with the doctrine, and in neither of them is it directly taught, how strongly soever it is implied. Or, suppose, in order to prove the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, we throw several texts together, as our Lord's commission to his Apostles, "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them," with His words in another place, "Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," and with

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xxviii. 9. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.



those of the Baptist, "Christ shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost;" and of St. Paul, God has "saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost";—such a combination may afford an easy proof of the doctrine: but would such a collection of texts have readily suggested itself to every student of the Bible, or would the doctrine have been easily gathered from any one of them by itself?—At any rate, in no one of these passages, nor in all of them together, do we find such a direct statement of the doctrine, as is conveyed in a Catechism or an Article of faith. "The inward and spiritual grace of Baptism is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness—we are hereby made the children of grace."

And this we should do, if we would ascertain whether or not particular statements are direct or systematic; we should compare them with those which evidently are so, inspired or uninspired. The teaching of the Mosaic Law, for example, is direct. From the books of Moses alone we could almost set forth in order the due celebration of every Festival or Sacrifice through-

\* Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Matt. iii. 11. Mark i. Luke iii. John iii. 5. Tit. iii. 5.

\* Compare Article xxvii. "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration, or new Birth, whereby, &c."

out the complex Ritual of the Law. Have we any directions equally explicit in the New Testament respecting the only two Rites appointed by our Lord? Disobedience there might be, but doubt or dispute there could not be under the Law, respecting points of such transcendent and practical importance as the time for admission into the Covenant, or even the very object of our worship. And in like manner, when uninspired men would explicitly state or teach the Christian doctrines, they draw up Creeds, Articles of Faith, Catechisms, Broken Catechisms, taking all possible pains to render them direct, explicit, simple, or systematic, as the case may be; but there is nothing like a formal Creed or Catechism throughout the whole volume of the New Testament.

Rudiments of systems there are, no doubt; passages which may form parts of Creeds, or answers in Catechisms, explicit *to us*, but still not as yet arranged into formal systems, or delivered as our *primary* instruction in the faith<sup>p</sup>. So likewise there are entire Epistles which *we* may regard as systematic, or at least with reference to certain leading doctrines; as the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the Priesthood and Sacrifice of Christ, or to the Romans respecting Justification by faith and Sanctification. But

<sup>p</sup> As 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. Eph. iv. 4—6. Tit. ii. 11—14. iii. 4—8. 1 John, i. 7, &c.

the question is, whether they have that kind of system and directness which is requisite for *elementary* and *introductory* teaching. And certain it is, that St. Paul addresses the Hebrews as persons “who ought for the time to have been teachers,” and the Romans as saints, “whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world<sup>p</sup> ;” and if the Epistle to the Romans is one of the most systematic, it is also one of the most difficult of all the Apostolic writings.

II. I shall assume, then, that inquiry has been made, and that the structure of the Christian Scriptures has been found upon examination to be, to no inconsiderable extent, indirect and unsystematic; and now upon the various facts that have thus passed under our review let us observe,—

1. First, that they are all in perfect harmony with one another, and all point together to the same conclusion.

The structure of the New Testament exactly accords with the circumstances under which it was composed. If there is an absence of direct and systematic teaching, which we should have little

<sup>p</sup> Heb. v. 12. Rom. i. 7, 8.

anticipated, perhaps, in a written Revelation from the Most High, and which is by no means consistent with the language of many Protestant writers, yet what can be more in harmony with the other facts of the case,—the several books all addressed to Christians, to those who, it is implied, had been previously initiated in the Christian doctrines, and for whose instruction especial provision had been made, that provision existing before the Christian Scriptures, and ever afterwards preceding them, accompanying them, formed and appointed to be continued and carried down together with them to every succeeding generation? In such harmonious accordance do we find the *formation of the Christian Scriptures*, and the *institution of the Christian Church*; and the obvious inference is, that we must make use of *the Church and the Scriptures together*, as *two of the principal means in order to the attainment of Christian Truth*.

2. Not less obvious, again, is *the mode* in which we should, in the first instance at least, *employ both these instruments*;—the Church affording that *preliminary* instruction, which the New Testament presupposes; the Church *teaching*, the Scriptures *proving*; the Church *introducing* us to the doctrines of the Gospel, which the Scriptures *enforce and establish*; the Church handing down

the *system*, the Scriptures the *substance*, of Christian truth. What the voice of Reason and of the Moral Sense is to the Precepts of religion, that, in a word, the voice of the Church is to those revealed Doctrines, for which we have no natural preparation.

We need not attempt to define the precise extent to which this preparatory instruction is necessary; *who* require it, *or as to what doctrines*. Suppose that some happily gifted individuals could elicit for themselves from the Christian Scriptures alone, or from the New and the Old Testaments together, many, or most, or say every one of the Christian doctrines; it may still be true that Christians in general neither could have done this, nor were designed to do so. And who shall say what grievous error may not result from any unhappy attempt to make that exclusive independent use of the Scriptures, which the divine Author of Revelation did not design?

And so with respect to the truths themselves, no one of course imagines that some Christian truths are not more explicitly taught in holy writ than others. Let us for convenience sake distinguish the *Facts* recorded, from the *Doctrines* connected with them, and again from the *Institutions* of Christianity. Then it would probably be true, in general, that from the study of the New Testament alone we might collect

almost all the Facts, all at least which belong to the personal history of our Saviour, but not all those, perhaps, which illustrate that Dispensation of the Spirit, as it may be called, which is recorded in the Acts: still less should we be secured from passing unobserved, or receiving with hesitation, or possibly rejecting altogether, some of the most important Doctrines which give life and animation to the historical Facts: whilst of the Christian Institutions, their design, permanency, efficacy, we might never attain any adequate conceptions.

Greater precision upon these subjects it is needless at present to attempt. With the same data before them, different minds might not arrive at the same conclusions. Most Christians, it is probable, would consider some particular doctrines as so clearly taught, that they, at least, must be excepted; but different exceptions would be made by different men. It is enough if we recognise the general need there is for combining the introductory teaching of the Church with that of the Scriptures, and the imminent danger consequently which we incur of missing some important truth, if we perversely neglect either of the divinely appointed instruments by which truth is to be attained.

What, after all, are the common declamations against the iniquity of biassing the minds of the young by introducing them to the Christian doc-

trines, instead of leaving them to their own unassisted study of the Scriptures, but endeavours to prevent our placing them in the actual situation of those to whom these very Scriptures were addressed? And thus to perplex their path with unnecessary, nay, it may be, fatal difficulties, which the Christian Scriptures neither contemplated nor provided against, but from which the Christian Church was expressly appointed to keep them free<sup>1</sup>?

3. But it is further to be remarked, that wherever, or in whatever degree, this preparatory instruction by living teachers throws light upon some truth which had otherwise been obscure, or suggests a doctrine which we had otherwise failed to detect in the inspired word of God, it affects at the same time *the whole force and character of the Scriptural proof of the doctrine*. This it seems material to consider.

I am not claiming any *authority*, be it observed, for this Introduction which the Church supplies to the written word. Why I claim none will be shewn hereafter<sup>2</sup>. There was a time indeed, when it justly demanded implicit submission; for the oral and the written teaching of an Apostle were of exactly the same authority.

<sup>1</sup> Quarterly Review, September, 1819, p. 357, on Unauthoritative Tradition.

<sup>2</sup> In Sermon IV.

But no sooner were the *inspired* teachers of the Gospel withdrawn, than that paramount authority which they possessed was altogether withdrawn with them, or rather descended to no living teachers, but survived only in the word of inspiration transmitted to succeeding times. If the instruction of the Church could thenceforward lay claim to any authority, (a question which we must consider at a future time<sup>1</sup>), it could claim none which was not altogether different in kind. But for the purpose in hand there is no necessity that this introductory teaching should be authoritative at all; and yet it will affect the whole character of the Scriptural proof of any doctrine, in so far as it shall have imparted a greater simplicity and clearness to the doctrine and the proof of the doctrine taken together.

For there seems to be almost an instinctive demand in our nature that revealed truth should be clearly revealed; not that it should be discoverable by those who will not look for it, or that it should not be mysterious when discovered, but that to those who seek it with diligence and simplicity it should appear with some plainness of evidence to have been communicated from on high. Hence pious and able men have even ventured to assert the great clearness and perspicuity of Scripture, upon the principle that the

<sup>1</sup> In Sermons IV. V. and more expressly in Sermon VI.



absence of these qualities would be absolutely “repugnant to the wisdom and goodness of God.” “Strange!” exclaims Stillingfleet, “that ever men should judge the Scriptures obscure in matters necessary, when the Scripture accounts it so great a judgment for men not to understand them.” Hence also the painful difficulty before adverted to, when the pious believer is staggered by the seeming obscurity of those scriptural proofs, which nevertheless he cannot but perceive to be valid.—The very root of his difficulty is the assumption, that both the statement of a doctrine and the proof of it, are of necessity to be sought in one and the same document. Let him once perceive distinctly that the statement may be supplied by the Church, and the proof by the Scriptures, and the difficulty vanishes. I do not here refer to the Church as speaking collectively, or speaking with authority. Let us derive the statement of a doctrine from Parent, Teacher, Pastor, Friend, it matters not from whom, it matters not whether it comes to us with or without any force of authority, still the unauthoritative statement and the authoritative proof are together sufficient. No matter in such a case how in-

<sup>u</sup> Origines Sacrae, b. iii. c. vi. §. 8. Thirty Protestant Principles, annexed to ch. vi. of the Discourse concerning the Idolatry practised in the Church of Rome, Principle 13. Works, vol. v. See note at the end.

direct the proof; as a proof it may be even stronger, because it is indirect, built upon mere implications and allusions; but the direct statement and the indirect proof together constitute that clearness of evidence, which we almost instinctively require in whatever professes to be truth of Revelation.

4. And yet, lastly, let no one imagine that the argument which has been maintained insinuates any *defect in the volume of the New Testament*, or detracts in any way from the just *Perfection and Sufficiency of the Scriptures*.

For in what sense do we assert the Sufficiency or Completeness of the Scriptures? They are evidently expressions of convenience, relative terms, not to be used or understood without reference to certain implied objects and purposes for which the Holy Scriptures were designed. Doubtless for their proper and intended purposes the Scriptures are perfect; but not so for all imaginable purposes; not even for some which have been supposed to come within their range, as, for instance, the purpose of teaching, or even stating correctly, truths of natural science, Astronomy, or Geology. Neither are they sufficient for all conceivable purposes, but for their own; manifestly not, for example, for performing many of the active functions of the Church or the Ministry; and why may not this very function of

stating, suggesting, introducing Christian truths, be among the offices, not exclusively, but principally, of the Christian Church ?

The Sufficiency of the Scriptures for salvation is, I believe, truly and correctly laid down by the Church of England in her sixth Article. "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."—There is nothing here which militates against my present argument; nothing to affirm, that every Christian truth must be clearly and distinctly "read in the Scriptures;" nothing to declare, that they are our only means of attaining Christian truth. The means of attaining truth the Article does not define; but in declaring that no truth is to be thought requisite to salvation which is neither "read in" Holy Scripture, nor may be "proved thereby," it implies that we may derive our knowledge of the truth from other sources besides the Scriptures, although these, and these alone, in the judgment of the Church of England, supply the proof of every truth necessary to salvation. And this also I have desired to maintain. And in order to declare the more distinctly the paramount authority of Holy Scripture as the proof of Christian truth, I would even avoid every

phrase which might seem in any way to place the Church on the same footing of authority with the inspired word; never speaking of the Church and the Scriptures together as “the Guide and Rule of Faith,” but of Holy Scripture only as “the sole Rule of Faith.”

And far, very far from conceiving the indirect structure of the New Testament to be a defect, we should rather regard it as an excellence, and an additional title to our admiration and gratitude.

For the purpose of proof, of proof as distinct from clear statement or primary instruction, nothing is comparable to a train of implications and allusions pervading a whole work, rendering corruption or interpolation impossible, and demonstrating the habitual presence to the author’s mind of the important truth, which thus runs along like a golden thread interwoven with the whole tissue of his composition.

And what if instead of that indirect and unsystematic form which some have lamented in the Christian Scriptures, we had found there definite statements of doctrine, Creeds, Catechisms, Articles of Faith?—Assuredly there is enough and too much in the Church of Christ of that strong tendency to formalism in ourselves, and uncharitableness towards others, which contents itself with repeating the language of orthodoxy, or exacts from other men the most scrupulous and literal

adherence to every word and phrase in our own confessions of Faith. And yet at present for the most part we acknowledge them to be after all, however useful, or necessary, or admirable, the compositions of uninspired men. It is no fanciful alarm with which we may imagine the superstitious, the almost idolatrous, reverence with which our Creeds would have been too often regarded, had they been indeed and confessedly the very language of Inspiration.

The actual form of the Scriptures, meanwhile, by its very indirectness, want of system, and apparent adaptation to local and temporary circumstances, tends to a variety of important moral results; awakening attention, stimulating curiosity, promoting research, rewarding diligence, humility, reverence, and conducing to the growth and strength not of mere belief, but of a genuine religious Faith—"to that excitement of the best feelings, and that improvement of the heart," to borrow the language of a living writer, "which are the natural and doubtless the designed result of an humble, diligent, and sincere study of the Christian Scriptures." And "How admirable," he continues, "do the provisions of Divine Wisdom appear, even from the slight and indistinct views we obtain of it! It has supplied us by revelation with the knowledge of what we could not have discovered for ourselves; and it has left us to

ourselves precisely in those points in which it is best for us that we should be so left\*.”

To ourselves alone, however, we have not been left. There is yet another result of the actual structure of the Scriptures, and the only one which I shall at present notice, upon which we may dwell with devout thankfulness, the full play and opportunity, namely, which it affords to the best feelings of our *social* nature.

Our Heavenly Father did not send forth a Book to evangelize the world. He would have living teachers of the word of truth. Man was to teach man. None were to be independent of their brethren. And almost all in their various spheres, not Ministers alone, but Parents in an especial degree, and Mothers almost more than Fathers, and not only these, but Teachers, Catechists, Masters, friends, neighbours, have been permitted to share in the heavenly employment of communicating to others the blessed truths which they have received, and of adapting them moreover to every capacity and every age. “Revelation,” says an eloquent writer, “is not at war with nature. Revelation has a striking agreement with the chief method which God has instituted for carrying forward individuals and

\* Abp. Whately, *Peculiarities of the Christian Religion*, (3d edit.) Essay vi. p. 342—345. on the omission of Articles of Faith, &c. in the New Testament.

the race, and is thus in harmony with his ordinary operations. Whence is it that we all acquire our chief knowledge? not from the outward universe; not from the fixed laws of material nature; but from intelligent beings, more advanced than ourselves. The teachings of the wise and good are our chief aids. Were our connexion with superior minds broken off, had we no teacher but nature with its fixed laws, its unvarying revolutions of night and day and seasons, we should remain for ever in the ignorance of childhood. Nature is a volume which we can read only by the help of an intelligent interpreter. The great law under which man is placed is, that he shall receive illumination and impulse from beings more improved than himself. Now revelation is only an extension of this universal method of carrying forward mankind. In this case, God takes on Himself the office to which all rational beings are called. He becomes an immediate teacher to a few, communicating to them a higher order of truths than had before been attained, which they in turn are to teach to their race. Here is no new power or element introduced into the system, but simply an enlargement of that agency on which the progress of man chiefly depends<sup>r</sup>.—The sentiment is just. And would to heaven that this intelligent but not well-in-

<sup>r</sup> Dr. Channing's Discourses, i. p. 15, 16. Compare also Discourse iii. p. 120 et seq.

structed writer, and all who think with him, and all our brethren, and they are many, who if they do not cherish a spirit of proud independence in their search after religious truth, yet take confined and partial views of the Divine purposes and of their own duty, could be induced to trace this just sentiment to all its consequences;—no longer seeking to collect the truth from the Scriptures alone, as if the Church had no existence or use; but observing, and with profound gratitude, how the Christian Scriptures and the Christian Church grew up together, in harmony with one another and with nature and with providence, two several Instruments of Truth, distinct in their uses, and altogether different in authority, yet concurrent, and cooperating, having one consistent purpose, and the same allwise, and most gracious Author.

O Almighty God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner-stone; Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## S E R M O N    III.



2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

CONTINUE THOU IN THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST  
LEARNED AND HAST BEEN ASSURED OF, KNOWING OF  
WHOM THOU HAST LEARNED THEM ; AND THAT FROM A  
CHILD THOU HAST KNOWN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, WHICH  
ARE ABLE TO MAKE THEE WISE UNTO SALVATION  
THROUGH FAITH WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

THAT the Scriptures of the *Old Testament* should thus be able to make the Christian wise unto salvation, affords at once a striking attestation to the importance of religious truth, and a signal proof of the wisdom and goodness of Almighty God.

The Volume of the New Covenant was begun and completed almost within the compass of a single generation ; as if when God had “ in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,” the sound of that heavenly voice, once uttered, was never to die away. But “ at sundry times and in divers

manners He spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets;" revealing His will and His ways from time to time in Psalm and Prophecy, the Law, and History, during ten successive centuries, and to thirty generations of men. Yet whilst these various Scriptures were in every instance mercifully adapted to the various wants and exigencies of the age to which they were originally addressed, all were contrived, nevertheless, for great religious uses, prospective as well as immediate; built up together into one vast system of Preparation for the Gospel; and fitted to be "profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness," to us and to our children for ever.

Of this merciful display of the Divine wisdom, and this great instrument of Truth, no account was taken in the last Discourse. And not only is it essential to an Inquiry into the Means of attaining Christian Truth, that the signal uses in this behalf of the Old Testament as well as the New should not be left without notice, but I am also obliged to advert to them, in order to guard the argument already maintained from an objection of some moment.

For, looking to the structure of the New Testament, to the circumstances under which it was composed, and the persons to whom it was addressed, I attempted to shew both that the Christian Scriptures required and implied some

extrinsic Introduction to their doctrinal teaching, and also that it was provided and intended from the first that this Introduction should be supplied by the Christian Church. And the inference was, the general necessity of combining together the uses of the Church and of the Scriptures.—But might not the Scriptures of the Old Testament themselves discharge the very important office, here ascribed to the Church, of introducing men to the truths of the Gospel? Do they not in fact abound in Christian instruction? Is it not written, that they “testify of Christ?” are “able to make us wise unto salvation?” Was not the law “our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ?” And is not the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ “witnessed by the Law and the Prophets<sup>a</sup>?”

I reply, that this is the truth, but not the whole truth; that, however plausible the objection may appear to the strenuous advocate of the exclusive and independent study of the Scriptures, it does not express the true use of the Old Testament, nor the exact sense of the passages upon which it appears to rely. When St. Paul describes the Old Scriptures as able to make his disciple “wise unto salvation,” he adds—“through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” To discover the right method of ascertaining “the

<sup>a</sup> John v. 39, 40. Acts xvii. 2, 3. 11, 12. Gal. iii. 24. 2 Tim. iii. 14—17. Rom. iii. 21, 22.

faith which is in Christ Jesus," is the very business of our inquiry. But to Timothy the doctrines of the Gospel were already known; they were the very "things which he had learned and had been assured of, knowing of whom he had learned them;" in which therefore he was exhorted to "continue," being indeed "the form of sound words," "the things which he had heard of St. Paul among many witnesses," and which he was himself in turn to "commit unto faithful men, able to teach others also<sup>b</sup>." Far from implying that the Old Scriptures are the appointed Introduction to the New, the language of St. Paul would rather indicate that they shine with reflected light; that radiant as they are to the Christian with the wisdom of salvation, they derive this splendour from the beams of Gospel truth. For although the Law and the Prophets testify of Christ, it may require the knowledge of the Christian to interrogate them aright. Texts which involve a Christian doctrine, may not of themselves either state or suggest it. Type and prophecy may be to the Christian as a pillar of light, yet as "a cloud and darkness" to those who are without the camp of God. Or, again, the successive Dispensations recorded in the Old Testament may be every one of them preparatory to the Gospel, and yet the Records of those dispensations may

<sup>b</sup> 2 Tim. i. 13. ii. 2. iii. 14.

not be the intended Introduction to the doctrines of the Gospel. Or the Old Scriptures may have happily prepared the Jew for a better covenant, but may prove nevertheless an insufficient guide to those who have not been educated and living, like the Jew, under a preparatory system and typical institutions.

It is obvious that an adequate discussion of this subject would far exceed our present limits. But by some particular examples, and observations, and by separate notices of three principal portions of the sacred Volume,—*the Historical Scriptures*, namely, the *Books of the Law*, and those of the *Psalms and Prophets*,—I shall endeavour to give some degree of form and distinctness to the general views which have been suggested respecting the uses of the Old Testament subsequently to the Christian æra;—seeking to illustrate, rather than to establish, them; and to offer a few hints to those who would inquire at greater length, HOW FAR THE OLD SCRIPTURES ARE, OR ARE NOT, INTRODUCTORY TO THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES.

I. In the first place, it is plain, that throughout the whole volume of the Old Testament, a deep foundation is laid for the Gospel by the establishment of the great truths of Natural Religion, the doctrines of Creation,

and Providence, the power, wisdom, goodness, justice, and faithfulness of God, and His moral government of mankind. All the several books concur in this important object. It constitutes one of the leading purposes of the Mosaic Law; and to foretell future events was scarcely so much the office of the Prophets, as to be Preachers of Righteousness<sup>c</sup>. But no one would describe these doctrines, how necessary soever they are to the Christian system, as an actual Introduction to it.

I. Not so the history of the non-observance of the laws of Natural Religion, and the casting away its truths. The record of man's guilt and weakness is more immediately preparatory to the Christian doctrines, since it tends directly to establish the need both of Redemption and of Sanctification. To supply this record, accordingly, is one of the great purposes of the *Historical Scriptures*, whilst they first relate the history of the Fall, and then trace out the long-continued proofs of human depravity, under every variety of trial, with a written law and without one; and this with such unsparing minuteness and naked fidelity, as are indeed afflicting to all men, but perplexing to those who are not sufficiently aware of the purpose of these painful histories.

<sup>c</sup> See Mr. Davison's Discourses on Prophecy, Discourse II.

This historical record, then, of human guilt and weakness is, no doubt, a signal preparation for the Gospel. Yet to describe the disorder, is not to suggest the remedy. Upon the basis of this sad history the Apostle could indeed construct his indissoluble argument, proving that the whole world was guilty before God, in order to teach the Christian doctrines of Justification and Grace<sup>d</sup>; but who would have anticipated them from the history itself? Nay, it is remarkable, that the historical narratives of human guilt overflow with proofs of the Divine loving-kindness; and that fearful Enmity which sin had interposed between fallen man and his Creator, is not described in the strongest terms, until the Reconciliation also had been disclosed<sup>e</sup>.

But this Reconciliation, some will say, had been revealed even from the æra of the Fall. And, certainly, there were intimations even from the Fall of some gracious Restoration. Not for a moment was the condemned sinner left without a principle of hope; type and prophecy even in the Historical Scriptures point to the Redeemer; and the eye of faith was under every dispensation of Religion directed towards the Saviour, however dim and indistinct the heavenly

<sup>d</sup> Rom. i.—viii.

<sup>e</sup> I have treated of these subjects more at length in Discourses on the Historical Scriptures, II. and III.

image upon which it rested<sup>f</sup>. Nevertheless, theirs is a very dangerous theology, which seeing more in the Scripture than it contains, “furnishes to others one pretext of excuse for seeing less<sup>g</sup>.” And the earlier Scriptures have been continually supposed by Christian readers, and even by Christian divines, to preach the very truths of the Gospel, of which, until the full light of Christian truth is poured upon them, they only afford remote and obscure intimations.

Of Types, of course, it is not to be expected that they should of themselves reveal their secret import. We are taught by St. Paul, for example, to view in the history of Melchizedek a remarkable adumbration of the eternal priesthood of Christ; but surely without this instruction we should scarcely have discovered any the slightest shade of evangelical meaning in the passage itself; nor should we have been guided to its spiritual sense even by the allusion to it in the 110th Psalm<sup>h</sup>. The Christian Church, again, has with one consent recognised a conspicuous type of the Gospel sacrifice in the commanded

<sup>f</sup> Sherlock, Discourses on the Use and Intent of Prophecy, III. p. 45. (Ed. 1812.) Davison on the Origin and Intent of Primitive Sacrifice, p. 151—153.

<sup>g</sup> Davison on Primitive Sacrifice, p. 73, 154, 155, 156; and see instances there cited from Lightfoot, Bochart, and Lamy, p. 70, 71, 164, 165.

<sup>h</sup> Gen. xiv. Ps. cx. Heb. vii.



sacrifice of Isaac. We need not hesitate to adopt the language of a great Divine, that “ of all the Prophetic Types, this one, in the commanded sacrifice of Isaac, appears to be among the most significant. It stands at the head of the dispensation of Revealed Religion, as reduced into Covenant with the people of God in the person of their Founder and Progenitor. Being thus displayed, as it is, in the history of the *Father of the Faithful*, it seems to be wrought into the foundations of Faith. In the surrender to sacrifice of a beloved Son, the Patriarchal Church *begins* with an adumbration of the Christian reality<sup>1</sup>.” But to whom is it thus significant? to the uninstructed reader, or to the Christian? The uninstructed reader, it may be feared, far from detecting a sense like this, is more likely to find a stumblingblock in the very nature of that divine command.

But the Historical books record also a succession of very early Prophecies of the Redeemer; and in the first of them, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head, some Christian commentators have even discovered a complete revelation of the mystery of salvation by the sacrifice of the Son of God. Yet, not to dwell upon the likelihood that many a student, left to his own guidance alone, might altogether pass by a prediction so obscure in itself, and

<sup>1</sup> Davison, *Primitive Sacrifice*, p. 170.

involved so indirectly in the sentence pronounced upon the serpent, this at least may, I apprehend, be stated safely, with the Divine already cited, that the promise could comprehend only the prospect of Redemption; that it conveys no intimation of Atonement by Sacrifice; that the expression “the seed of the woman” could not suggest the idea of the Supreme nature of the Saviour, nor the “bruising of his heel” of his penal sufferings and death<sup>k</sup>. But nothing is so easy as to forget that texts may imply a truth without suggesting it. The Resurrection of the dead, for example, is shewn in that appellation, “the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob;” but had any one discovered the doctrine in these words, until our Lord unlocked their secret sense<sup>l</sup>? And so of the prophecy to Abraham, “in thee shall all nations be blessed,” this the Apostle describes as the very preaching of “the Gospel;” for indeed it implies the Universality of the Gospel-covenant, and the Gospel-doctrine of Justification by Faith<sup>m</sup>. Yet so far were the Jews from having imbibed either of these great truths, that nothing was so difficult as to lead them to the evangelical doctrine of Justification,

<sup>k</sup> Davison, *Primitive Sacrifice*, p. 168. and 153. 164, 165. 193.

<sup>l</sup> Excd. iii. 6. Matt. xxii. 31—38.

<sup>m</sup> Gal. iii. 8. Acts x. xi. 18. xv. 13—18. See *Discourses on the Historical Scriptures*, V. VI.

whilst as to the Universality of the Gospel, even the Apostles were not without difficulty instructed, and this seven years subsequently to the descent of the Holy Spirit, that to the Gentiles also had God “granted repentance unto life.”

The Historical Scriptures, then, of the Old Testament, it may thus appear, are and are not a preparation for the Gospel. They do indeed disclose to the eye of the Christian some of the great foundations upon which the Christian System is established, but they do not offer to the uninstructed that Introduction which we are seeking to the doctrines of the Gospel. And if we proceed in the next place from the few Types and Prophecies scattered up and down in the Historical Scriptures to the full disclosures of Gospel-truth in the Psalms and Prophets, and the very remarkable system of Typical Institutions in the Law, we may still discover, that although they are throughout prospective, looking forward to the Gospel, and preparing the way for it, yet neither do they constitute the natural Introduction to the Christian doctrines.

And to this conclusion we may be led in part by what has been already mentioned, the general inability of the Jews to anticipate such elementary truths, as the Evangelical doctrine of Justification, or the Universal extent of the New Covenant.

2. For that the *Law of Moses* was wonderfully framed to prefigure the truths of Christianity, the Christian could have scarcely doubted, even if the New Testament had not informed him that the law had “a shadow of good things to come,” and its singular institutions “served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.”

Even in the Facts upon which it was founded, and which are made so prominent in the history, as the Redemption of the Israelites from Egypt, their Election, their conquest of Canaan, the land of Promise, not for their righteousness, nor by their own strength ; and again in their signal privilege, the manifestation of the presence of God dwelling among his people, the Christian reader observes illustrations of the most important Christian doctrines, so apt and so remarkable, that he cannot but regard them as designed ; and to his mind they are striking confirmations of the truth, although he would not employ them as arguments to convince the unbeliever.

We pass on, however, to Rites and Institutions avowedly typical, and possessing all the characters of perfect and unequivocal Types ; that is to say,

<sup>n</sup> Heb. x. 1. viii. 2, 5, 6. ix. 23. Col. ii. 17. The same truth is also shewn incidentally ; as e. g. with respect to God's dwelling among his people visibly under the Law, invisibly by his Spirit under the Gospel, and for a time in the person of Christ, cf. 2 Cor. vi. 16. John i. 14. with Exod. xxv. 8. xxix. 45. Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. and with the Prophets, Jer. xxxi. 33. xxxii. 38. Ezek. xi. 20. xxxvi. 28. xxxvii. 26, 27. xliii. 7.

being *divinely appointed*, and having their typical import *declared by divine authority*, and *ceasing themselves and vanishing away when their Anti-types appeared*. Of this class, I need not say, were the remarkable figures of the Christian Atonement, and of Christ our only Mediator and Advocate, in the Priesthood and the Sacrifices of the Law. Would that all Christians admitted without reserve, as very nearly all do, and, without some mistrust of the authority and inspiration of the New Testament, cannot but admit, the weight and value of these typical appointments in establishing and enforcing the infinite importance of the Christian realities! And would also that the Church of Rome had not by doctrines, unknown to the Scriptures, concerning the Christian Priesthood, and the sacrifice of the Altar, grievously obscured the typical character of the Mosaic shadows; causing them to appear as if continued still in the Christian Church, instead of being fulfilled in Christ our Lord, the one Priest and only Sacrifice under the new covenant<sup>o</sup>; obstructing, consequently, the argument derived from the types of the Law, and impeding the universal reception of the all-important doctrine of the Christian Atonement!

But further, because the Law, although sur-

<sup>o</sup> See Outram De Sacrificiis, lib. i. c. xix. §. v. See also a Sermon by Abp. Whately on "Christ the only Priest under the Gospel."

rounded by circumstances of awe and splendour fitted to arrest the imagination and affections of the chosen people, was nevertheless designed for an office subordinate and preparatory, there were seeds of weakness and unprofitableness sown within it from the first; and by these also it paved the way for Christianity. I do not allude merely to the general Inferiority of the Law when contrasted afterwards with the Gospel;—as, for example, in the visible presence of God within the Tabernacle compared with His spiritual presence in the Christian Church, or the succession of its mediators mortal, and sinful, contrasted with our heavenly Mediator, one, spotless, and eternal;—for this inferiority, it is evident, could not be discovered until after the advent of the Redeemer. But I refer to particular Defects and Omissions in the Law, which may well be conceived to have been designed beforehand to lead reflecting minds towards a “better covenant established upon better promises,” or at the least to incline them to hail its approach with gladness, when it should at length arrive.

Thus throughout the whole Law there are only three instances in which the great natural duty of Prayer is enjoined; only one in which a blessing is promised to Prayer; and not one, in which the injunction is applicable to the whole people<sup>p</sup>. Yet more remarkable is the fact, that the books

<sup>p</sup> Lancaster, *Harmony of the Law and the Gospel*, c. vii.

of Moses, a collection of writings nearly equal in extent to the whole volume of the New Testament, contain no one express revelation of the Immortality of the soul ; whilst the Law did not comprehend a future state of Retribution among its sanctions, and did not afford one promise of Eternal life. And, again, in that complex system of sacrificial atonements, the Israelite would look in vain for any complete expiation of moral guilt, except in a very few specified instances, making the general defect even more remarkable. For the legal atonements, although they removed the stain of ceremonial offences, only so far put away moral guilt, that they procured acceptance for the worship of the sinner ; enabling him indeed to approach the presence of God and not die, but not procuring for him the promise of forgiveness. Neither did the Law, although it taught the efficacy of national repentance in order to national restoration, declare that personal Repentance should avail for the forgiveness of personal guilt ; nor would the sinner discover under the Law any complete and sufficient Justification<sup>9</sup>.

So elaborately was the typical system adapted by its negative as well as its positive character, by its very defects and omissions as well as by

<sup>9</sup> Bp. Warburton, *Divine Legation*. Davison, *Discourses on Prophecy*, II. Lancaster, *Harmony*, &c. ch. vii. Sermon on Extent and Efficacy of Mosaic Atonements, appended to *Discourses on Historical Scriptures*. And see note at the end.

its positive Institutions, to be the forerunner of the Gospel—its Rites and Institutions tending in various ways to excite and foster religious impressions the most appropriate to fallen beings, the sense of guilt and the hope of pardon, the prospect of a mysterious road to reconciliation and favour through mediation, intercession, and vicarious sacrifice; the unworthiness of man, the holiness and justice, yet the mercy and placability of his Maker—for indeed the *mercy* of God is the basis of the whole religious creed of man *fallen*—yet, again, its singular Omissions and Defects, creating in reflecting minds as it were a want and desire of a better covenant, which might “bring immortality to light,” and “justify them from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses<sup>r</sup>.”—Nevertheless, when all these things have been unreservedly admitted, is it to be supposed that the mere study of the Law will be efficacious to lead the minds of men, not previously initiated in Gospel truth, to the genuine doctrines of the Gospel, when so many even of those who were trained up under the Legal Institutions misread them altogether, and looking to the Law itself for Life and Justification, rejected Him who came to complete and to fulfil the Law?

3. And now, if we attempt in like manner to

<sup>r</sup> Acts xiii. 38, 39. 2 Tim. i. 10.



throw a rapid glance over the Preparation for the Gospel as it was continued and enlarged by *the Psalmists and Prophets*, let us bear in mind, that the Jew who thus misunderstood the oracles of his Law, had read them nevertheless under the full light of Prophecy.

It was of necessity that a veil should be spread over the face of Moses. It is of the essence of a Type to be a *concealed* prophecy ; “ needing to be interpreted either by its divine Author, or by the event ; that is, either by his Word, or by his Providence.” But the import of his typical Institutions was unperceived or misinterpreted by the Jew, notwithstanding that their Evangelical interpretation had been in part supplied by the Prophets, and that mysterious veil in part withdrawn. And if he failed to perceive the Gospel when it had thus been “ witnessed both by the Law and by the Prophets,” we may be the rather inclined to believe, that the Old Scriptures do not in fact supply that Introduction, which we are in search of, to the doctrines of the New Testament. And yet it is almost superfluous to mention what a vast flood of light was poured upon the doctrines of Redemption by the volumes of later prophecy. No longer like the occasional predictions in the Historical writings, exciting faint hopes of a reversal of the sentence consequent upon the Fall, or obscurely promising

\* Davison, Primitive Sacrifice, p. 174.

some great spiritual blessing ultimately to descend upon all mankind, nor merely restricting the conveyance of this blessing through the line of Shem, of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the tribe of Judah, and the family of David, the later prophecy gradually unfolded the very nature of the promised blessing, the office of the Messiah, his Kingdom, his Divine Nature, Incarnation, Vicarious Sufferings, his Death, and its Atoning efficacy. What the Law foreshadowed, the Prophets foretold; and foretold gradually. Thus "the Atoning Sacrifice was simply foreshadowed in the Law; the Sufferings of the Messiah, but not their expiatory office, are depicted in the Psalms; His Passion and Atonement are united together in the later Prophecy<sup>1</sup>." Whilst the proofs of human guilt and weakness were gradually accumulating, the means of pardon and grace were gradually unveiled. With the dawn of the doctrine of the Atonement appeared intimations of the efficacy of Personal Repentance, the doctrines of a Resurrection, of Life and Immortality. And the later Prophets did not simply, as some have imagined, *interpret* the Mosaic system, but gradually *altered and expanded* it, shading it off into a better covenant, spiritual, universal, everlasting.

Still "even these last oracles of Prophecy," observes the eminent Divine already cited, "had their difficulty and darkness resting upon them,

<sup>1</sup> Davison, *Primitive Sacrifice*, p. 175—177.

till the Gospel, which they foretold, gave them their complete elucidation.—The doctrine of the Gospel had been *revealed*, and *not revealed*. It was dark, with the excess of the mystery, till it shone in the person of the Saviour, in whom was seen ‘the fulness of grace and truth.’ For then was come the time when the plan of Grace and Redemption was to be *revealed* by being *accomplished*, and the doctrines of it to be made *explicit objects* of Faith<sup>t</sup>.” Then, and not before, according to St. Paul, came “the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now,” he continues, “is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets made known to all nations for the obedience of faith<sup>u</sup>.”

And this obscurity of Prophecy, antecedently to its accomplishment, is occasioned not merely by the nature of the subject, and the nature of man, but by its own accustomed form and structure. Not only is the work of our Redemption altogether “a Supernatural Dispensation, and the mind of man is slow in apprehending the counsels of God;” but the predictions of this Supernatural Dispensation so spring for the most part out of the history and circumstances of persons and dispensations then existing, as the sufferings of David, for example,

<sup>t</sup> Davison, Primitive Sacrifice, p. 177.

<sup>u</sup> Rom. xvi. 25, 26. 1 Cor. ii. 7. Eph. iii. 5, 9. Col. i. 26.

or the captivity and restoration of Israel, that even the Christian cannot always distinguish them readily and certainly from the stock on which they are engrafted. Hence even the Prophets themselves “enquired and searched diligently, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow<sup>x</sup> :” and how then should their predictions be otherwise than obscure to those who have neither the inspiration of the Prophet, nor the knowledge of the Christian?—“They pierced my hands and my feet—they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture;”—interpreted by the event, and by the Spirit in the New Testament, these words indeed, together with the Psalm which contains them, bear certain and evident testimony to Christ: what would they suggest to one who has not been already brought to Christ? And yet this twenty-second Psalm is described by Luther as “a kind of gem among the Psalms that contain prophecies of Christ and his kingdom. David,” he says, “does not seem to be delivering a prophecy of the future, but a history of the past; he speaks of Christ nailed to the tree, and the piercing of his hands and his feet, as if the whole had

<sup>x</sup> 1 Pet. i. 10—12.

taken place before his natural sight<sup>y</sup>.” Just so the heading of the hundred and tenth Psalm in the English version is, “The kingdom, the priesthood, the conquest, and the passion of Christ;” and Luther again declares concerning it, “there is not a Psalm like it in the whole Scripture; and it ought to be very dear unto the Church; seeing that it confirms that great article of faith—Christ’s sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. For Christ is here declared to be a King and Priest; sitting at God’s right hand, not only as truly man, but also as properly God, the Propitiator and Mediator between God and men; the Omnipotent and the Eternal!” This is the commentary of a Christian, when the Psalm had been interpreted by Christ Himself; but was not our Lord’s interpretation evidently received by the Jew as a new and surprising doctrine<sup>z</sup>?” For the Jew did indeed expect in the Christ the Son of David, but not his Lord. And thus also Justin Martyr reasons with the Jew from the Jewish prophecies, to prove this great doctrine of the Divinity of the Messiah; but this he does, not as a Jew might have regarded them before, but as they are illuminated by the full light of

<sup>y</sup> *Argumenta Psalmorum. Lutheri Op. tom. iii. p. 363, 382. Ed. Wittebergæ, 1583. See note at the end.*

<sup>z</sup> *Matt. xxii. 41—46. Mark xii. 35—37.*

Christian doctrine;—nay, he confesses that they had not been understood before, “since had ye understood,” he writes, “the things that were spoken by the Prophets, ye would not have denied that he is God, the Son of the only, and unbegotten, and ineffable God<sup>a</sup>.” Or let us take the fifty-third chapter of the Prophet Isaiah, which one eminent writer selects as the very clearest example of ancient prophecy, and of which another declares, that “this chapter, or perhaps a single text in it, ‘Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,’ comprehends more of the real disclosure of this Christian principle, (the Atonement,) than could be previously gathered from all the Law and the Prophets<sup>b</sup>”—yet we know that the Ethiopian, zealous as he must have been in the pursuit of truth, was constrained to ask, “of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?”—a fact pregnant with instruction to those who would study the Scriptures with no man to “guide them<sup>c</sup>.” Nay, we know who it was that opened the Scriptures to his Disciples, and how “slow of heart”

<sup>a</sup> Ἐπεὶ εἰ νοήκατε τὰ εἰρημένα ὑπὸ τῶν προφητῶν, οὐκ ἂν ἐξηγείσθε αὐτὸν εἶναι Θεόν, τοῦ μόνου καὶ ἀγενήτου καὶ ἀβήτου Θεοῦ υἱόν. Dial. cum Tryphone, p. 355. Ed. Coloniae. (p. 408. Ed. Thirlbii.)

<sup>b</sup> Paley, Evidences, Part II. ch. i. Davison, Primitive Sacrifice, p. 176.

<sup>c</sup> Acts viii. 27—35.

had those Disciples been, “to believe all that the Prophets had spoken,” until their “hearts burned within them,” as their Lord and Master, “beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself<sup>d</sup>.” But indeed, as was observed before, they had lost one of the very keys of the ancient prophecies, which, in general, are then most distinctly perceived to be Evangelical predictions, when they speak of the calling of the Gentiles, and that Universality of the Gospel covenant, which in so marked a manner distinguishes it from the transitory partial covenant of the Law; but this very doctrine, notwithstanding the teaching of the Prophets and of Christ Himself, even Apostles had not recognised until seven years after the ascension of their Lord<sup>e</sup>. So vast is the difference between the anticipation of events and their accomplishment, between the disclosure of doctrines by prediction, and by direct instruction; and so true is it that the Old Scriptures are indeed “able to make us wise unto salvation,” but “through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

II. I cannot, however, but be sensible that it is somewhat difficult to carry the mind over

<sup>d</sup> Luke xxiv. 25—32.

<sup>e</sup> Acts x. xi. 1—18. xv. 13—18.

so large a field, and survey without distraction at a single glance the varied subjects of the History, the Law, and the Prophets of the Old Testament; and this more especially when the very business of the Discourse is to exhibit the Old Scriptures as preparatory and not preparatory to the New; as at once a studied preparation for the Gospel, and yet not the natural Introduction to the Gospel doctrines.

Let me then endeavour to bring these observations to a point, guard them against misapprehension, and finally illustrate them by one distinct and important example.

1. In the first place, let it be repeated, that in the Old Testament Religious Truth is indeed written in characters of light, but not Christian Truth; truths of revelation of deep interest and importance, but not Christian doctrines. Nay, and Christian doctrines are written there also, and to the eye of the Christian vividly and distinctly written, but they are dark and enigmatical to the uninstructed; the Old Scriptures being wonderfully adapted to *confirm* the faith of the Christian, but not, in general, to *introduce* the religious inquirer to Christian truth.

Not, however, by any means that we are to withhold them even from the child. There is nothing, I believe, so suitable even to the tenderest



years as the very words of the Scriptures of both Testaments, explained, of course, illustrated, introduced by the voice of the Christian teacher. But we are speaking rather of the method of proof than the order of perusal. Not, again, that the successive Dispensations of Religion, nay and the records of those Dispensations, and every portion of the Old Scriptures, Historical, Legal, Moral, Prophetical, might not, and did not in very many ways prepare the minds of men for the reception of the Saviour. It was their office from the very first to keep alive in the breasts of fallen and guilty men some cheering hope of a Restoration; and doubtless the figures of the Law, and the voice of Prophecy, sounding louder and louder, as the kingdom of heaven came nearer, and sometimes even in distinct Gospel strains, not obscurely blended with the subjects of the temporal covenant<sup>a</sup>, but compelling attention to Messiah and His kingdom, did in effect awaken and sustain an expectation of His advent. And thus when the Messiah at length arrived, there were found some who “looked for redemption in Jerusalem<sup>b</sup>.” And it would be presumptuous to affirm, that no individual could be thus prepared even at this day to accept the doctrines of salvation. But yet

<sup>a</sup> As, e. g. in Is. ii. xi. xl. Micah iv. Jer. xxiii. 5. xxxi. 31. Ezek. xxxvii. Dan. ix. Zech. iii. vi. Mal. iii. iv.

<sup>b</sup> Mark xv. 43. Luke ii. 25. 38. xxiv. 21.

the doubts, and difficulties, and misconceptions, and extreme slowness of heart “to believe all that the Prophets had spoken,” even in those who had thus been prepared for the Gospel, and who not only “waited for consolation in Israel,” but hung upon the lips of Him “who spake as never man spake,” may well assure us, that the independent study of the Old Scriptures is not in general the designed and appointed road to Gospel truth.

For it is against *the Theory of the exclusive, independent study of the Scriptures* that the present argument is directed. This it is which I would fain shew to be untenable, and opposed to the intention of the Scriptures themselves, whether we regard the New Testament or the Old—the New Testament, as was formerly inferred both from its history and its structure, requiring some previous Introduction to the Christian doctrines; the Old Testament, as I have now endeavoured to shew, although in various ways preparatory to the Gospel and abundantly confirming its sacred truths, not affording that Introduction to them, which the Christian Scriptures require, and which the Christian Church supplies;—both the volumes of Holy Writ, in a word, leading us to one and the same conclusion, and pointing out the true path to the attainment of Christian Truth in *the combined use of the Scriptures and the Church*.

2. But why so anxious, I may be asked, to oppose the Theory which does not recognise this appointed use of the Church, when it is but a Theory after all, seldom if ever reduced to practice?—Perhaps it very seldom is directly reduced to practice. The advocate of the independent study of the Scriptures would instruct his children, probably, even as we should; not obliging them to discover Christian truth absolutely for themselves by their own unaided study of the sacred pages, but transmitting to them the light which he had himself received. Nay in a Christian land it can scarcely be otherwise. Almost every one must of necessity approach the Scriptures with some previous knowledge of those doctrines which the Church believes them to convey. Thus the method of study will be usually the same, whether we hold this theory or not. But its *indirect* effects, when it is not apparently reduced to practice, constitute its chief danger. Not to speak of its ill effects upon the disposition and the heart, the whole proof of doctrine, as was formerly explained, will be seriously affected by it. And the Scriptures will appear under totally different aspects to those who do, even in theory, and those who do not, regard them as their sole Instructors in the faith of Christ.

But enough or too much of general observations. One distinct example may be of more avail

to exhibit practically the use which we should make of the Scriptures and of the Church, of the Old Testament and of the New, and the practical importance of that method which I would recommend of attaining Christian truth.

How is it then, that to us the great doctrine of the *Christian Atonement* is taught in every page of the New Testament, and confirmed by the united voice of the Law and the Prophets, and yet others cannot read it there? That to them the Scriptures proclaim Eternal life, and Christ is their Prophet, and their future Judge, but He is not their Saviour?—One reason is,—doubtless there may be many other reasons, and some of them may be noticed hereafter, as we proceed to consider other means of attaining truth, and the qualifications for employing them aright,—but one reason surely is, that the Scriptures have been regarded as the exclusive source of Christian instruction; that recourse, accordingly, has been had to the Scriptures alone both for the statement and the proof of the doctrine; and the statement not appearing sufficiently direct and clear, neither does the proof appear sufficiently convincing.

Then as we tender the eternal welfare of the souls of men, believing that the King of kings has appointed and revealed one only method by which His subjects shall have access to His throne, let us earnestly endeavour to dissipate a

theory which may be fatal to them. Let it be supposed,—I feel indeed that it is peculiarly difficult in the instance of this particular doctrine to make the supposition, but, considering how it has been controverted, recollecting that there are those who so far from thinking that it is clearly taught, do not perceive that it is taught at all, let us suppose—that the Christian Atonement is not declared in the Scriptures with sufficient clearness. But the Church can state the doctrine with all the distinctness of which the subject is capable; and nothing but the living voice of the Church, we may add, could adapt the statement, by every conceivable variety of expression, to every mind of every age and capacity. Only let her beware that she does not encumber the simple doctrine of Revelation, with her own conceptions of the grounds and reasons or the fitness of the Atonement, as that it was necessary as an adequate Satisfaction to the Divine justice and the like, but simply declare the revealed fact, that Jesus Christ, by His blood upon the cross, effected the Reconciliation of a guilty world to their Maker, and procured for them Pardon and Acceptance<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>r</sup> See Mr. Veysie's Bampton Lecture, On the Atonement, Sermon I. p. 12—27. vi. p. 156—162. viii. p. 212, 213. where human opinions concerning the grounds of the Christian Atonement are distinguished from the revealed doctrine itself. Altogether I would recommend Mr. Veysie's work as

If it has been thus provided that the disciple shall receive the statement, what place is there for surprise or complaint from whatever quarter the statement reaches him, whether from the Scriptures or the Church? But let him then “search the Scriptures” with all diligence, “whether these things are so<sup>s</sup>.” He reads in the New Testament, almost in every page, and under a remarkable variety of expressions, that Jesus is “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;” His blood, “the blood of the New Covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins;” that “we are justified by His blood;” that “when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, by whom we have now received the atonement;” that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;” that we “who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ;” that “He is our peace,” He “reconciles both (Jew and Gentile) unto God in one body by the cross;” “through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father;” we are “sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ,” “redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;” “He is the pro-

better calculated to satisfy a doubting mind, than Archbishop Magee’s able and ingenious Dissertations.

<sup>s</sup> Acts xvii. 11.

pitiation for our sins," " His blood cleanseth us from all sin ;" " the Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many ;" He " gave Himself a ransom for all," ἀντίλυτρον a ransom instead of all ; hence we are " bought with a price," by Him, namely, who " was slain, and has redeemed us to God by His blood," who " was offered to bear the sins of many ;" who " His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree : " who " loved us, and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God ;" for He was " a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people ;" " by His own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us ;" and by virtue of His " unchangeable priesthood," " He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them '."

And after this, is it not the true and natural question, by what expressions, if not by these, would it be even possible that the doctrine of the Atonement could, if true, be established at all ? And yet this is not all. For we turn to the

<sup>1</sup> John i. 29. Matt. xxvi. 28. Rom. v. 9—11. 2 Cor. v. 18—21. Eph. ii. 13—18. Col. i. 20. Heb. x. 10. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. 1 John i. 7 ii. 2. iv. 10. Rom. iii. 25. Matt. xx. 28. 1 Tim. ii. 6. 1 Cor. vi. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 1. Rev. v. 9. Heb. ix. 28. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Eph. v. 2. Heb. ii. 17. ix. 12, 14. vii. 24, 25, &c. And see Veysie's Lectures, II, III, IV.

Old Scriptures to illustrate and confirm the New. We do not read them, (why should we ?) without the benefit of whatever light man can throw upon them ; much less do we study them, (as professing Christians how can we ?) without that light from heaven, with which our Lord Himself and His Apostles have illuminated their sacred pages. Nay, we dare not read them otherwise, lest that should happen to us which formerly befell so many of those to whom the oracles of God were first committed ; who thought that in the Scriptures they had eternal life, and overlooked their testimony to Him who is our life ; or they expected Christ as the Son of David, not as both the Son of David and his Lord ; or “ going about to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God, which is through faith ”. These are no imaginary dangers. The errors of the elder Church are written for our warning.

Therefore, “ *through faith which is in Christ Jesus,*” we look to the holy Scriptures of the Old Testament for wisdom unto salvation. And they evidently disclose not only a wonderful chain of testimony to the Saviour, linking together in one harmonious system the successive revelations

“ See John v. 39, 40. Matt. xxii. 41—46. v. 17. Rom. x. 1—4. ix. 30, 31.



from the Fall to the Redemption, but a striking confirmation of some of the most important Gospel truths ; and perhaps above all others, of this mysterious doctrine of the Atonement, in the records of the Sacred History, and the types of the Law, and the gradual disclosures of Prophecy.

Both the volumes of Inspiration, again, throw mutual light upon one another. Was blood prohibited to Noah ? was it expressly given under the Law as an atonement for the soul ? were “ almost all things under the Law purified by blood, and without shedding of blood was there no remission ? ”—We have all these surprising appointments of the typical system more than accounted for by the great sacrifice under the Gospel. Whilst this sacrifice, on the other hand, its use and its efficacy, and all the various offices of our great High Priest, our only Mediator, Intercessor, Advocate, are wonderfully illustrated and interpreted by the typical institutions of atonement and expiation.

Hence also the utter disproof of that perverse interpretation, (how can we express it by a milder term, if we admit the authority of both Testaments ?) which would resolve the whole mystery of the Gospel into a mere figure of speech, making the shadows real, and the substance nothing. The Apostle instructs us, on the contrary, that the figures are in the Law, the

great realities in the Gospel ; and they are expressed in terms not strictly figurative, but analogical ; the only terms in fact by which the things of heaven can be expressed to earthly ears. That is to say, when we term the Eucharist a *sacrifice* of praise and thanksgiving, we do indeed employ a figure of speech, the Eucharist not being itself a sacrifice, but the commemoration of a sacrifice ; when the death of the Saviour, on the contrary, is called a *Sacrifice*, or He is called our *High Priest*, these expressions denote the substance, of which the Jewish sacrifices and high priest were the shadows. We are incapable of exactly understanding the nature of the sacrifice upon the cross, or the actual offices of our Mediator and heavenly Intercessor, and we have no proper terms by which to express them ; but we obtain some notions, however imperfect, of these great mysteries, by *analogies* derived from their types under the Law, and we are taught to borrow our expressions for them from the types of the Law. As the animal sacrifices or the Priesthood of Aaron to the Jewish Economy, so is the Priesthood of Christ or the great Sacrifice upon the Cross to the Economy of Salvation. The Gospel realities exceed the Legal shadows as heaven surpasses earth ; it is impossible that we should form worthy and adequate conceptions of them in any case ; were it not for the aid of the typical

institutions, could we have even expressed them, or apprehended them at all\*?

Lastly, the holy Scriptures of both Testaments combine to demonstrate and enforce the extreme *importance* of the doctrine of the Atonement; not simply by the long course of preparation studiously carried on during four thousand years for its ultimate reception, but by the remarkable fact that it was made, as it were, the basis of religious sentiment and action, even before it could be revealed as an explicit article of faith. For the sentiments and principles of faith were taught and acted upon through the media of promises and types, long before the explicit revelation of Evangelical truth. And why was this, but because it is *the* religion of man fallen; and it reconciles together the Holiness, and the Justice, and the Mercy of Almighty God. Hence our earnest and continual prayer, that we, and all who acknowledge the unspeakable “love of God in the Redemption of the world by Jesus Christ,” “may always most thankfully receive that His inestimable benefit, and may also shew forth our thankfulness not only with our lips, but in our

\* On the important distinction between analogical terms, and terms simply figurative, see Veysie, Bampton Lecture V. See also Abp. King's Sermon on Predestination, edited by Abp. Whately, and Bp. Copleston's admirable Note on Analogical Terms, annexed to his third Discourse on Necessity and Predestination, p. 115—141.

lives ;” loathing the sin and the sinfulness which required the sacrifice of the Son of God, “ and daily endeavouring ourselves to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life ;” “ looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ;” having our conscience cleansed “ from dead works, to serve the living God .” And hence also our extreme, our inexpressible anxiety, that not one of our fallen and sinful race who has ever heard the name of his Redeemer, may fail to know Him as indeed his *Saviour*, approach the majesty of the King of kings by the only appointed mode of access to His throne, and render to the God of Holiness not only a willing but an acceptable service<sup>2</sup>, through His atoning blood, and all prevailing merits, whom not only the Church declares, but the Holy Scriptures, Old and New, demonstrate, to be “ the way, the truth, and the life.”

O Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life ; Grant us perfectly to know thy Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth,

<sup>2</sup> Tit. ii. 11—14. Heb. ix. 14. General Thanksgiving.  
Collect for Second Sunday after Easter.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 5.

and the life; that, following the steps of thy holy Apostles, we may stedfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## S E R M O N    I V.

---

Matt. xxii. 41—45.

WHILE THE PHARISEES WERE GATHERED TOGETHER, JESUS ASKED THEM, SAYING, WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? WHOSE SON IS HE? THEY SAY UNTO HIM, THE SON OF DAVID. HE SAITH UNTO THEM, HOW THEN DOETH DAVID IN SPIRIT CALL HIM LORD, SAYING, THE LORD SAID UNTO MY LORD, SIT THOU ON MY RIGHT HAND, TILL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES THY FOOTSTOOL? IF DAVID THEN CALL HIM LORD, HOW IS HE HIS SON?

NOTWITHSTANDING our descent from the same first parents, it is plain that there is a vast diversity, natural as well as acquired, in the constitution of different minds. This great mysterious doctrine, accordingly, of the Divinity of our blessed Lord, whilst to some it is surrounded with painful perplexities, and is hard to be received, and difficult to prove, to others, it would appear, presents scarcely any difficulty at all. And hence one cause among others of the facility with which Christian teachers too frequently refer

the inquirer for proof of this doctrine, or of that of the Trinity in Unity, to inconclusive arguments, fanciful analogies, and texts inapplicable, or then only applicable when the proof has already been securely established upon other grounds. But upon every principle of Christian charity we are deeply bound to bear constantly in mind the difficulties which beset other men. Whatever may have been the case with ourselves, we should recollect the painful slowness and hesitation with which others, not so happily circumstanced perhaps, have at length embraced the truth. We should consider also that there is nothing within us or about us, which could naturally prepare our minds for this great mystery of the Divinity of Messiah ; that it is purely a doctrine of Revelation ; and not only so, but that it appears at first sight to conflict with other revealed facts, and even with the great fundamental truth both of natural and revealed religion concerning the Divine nature : and further, that, unlike some other important doctrines, (as, for example, that of the Christian Atonement, when correctly apprehended,) it does not demand a belief which even if unfounded could do no harm ; but that, if untrue, it directly involves the believer in the deepest guilt, since upon the correctness or incorrectness of this most important doctrine it immediately depends, whether our worship of the Son of God is piety or blasphemy, a duty or a sin.



Altogether irrational, therefore, and inexcusable as it is, we must not be surprised if many minds start away at once when they perceive, or think they perceive, the advocates of such a doctrine advancing in its support arguments merely fanciful, or positively fallacious, or, as it appears to them, even tending to heighten the difficulty of the subject, and to strengthen the opposite conclusion. But the greater the danger of such a course as this, and the more important the doctrine itself, so much the more tremblingly alive ought we to be to the danger, and scrupulously cautious in our method of handling and proving the doctrine.

On the other hand it is easy to shew, that the very difficulty, and ineffable importance of this mysterious truth, combined with its almost universal reception, suggest a strong antecedent presumption in its favour. And to unfold this presumptive argument will form a part of the business of the present Discourse, of which it will be the general object—and may I be permitted and enabled to pursue it, if not with advantage to the cause of truth, yet without detriment to that sacred cause, and without irreverence!—my general object will be, to exhibit not indeed the full PROOF OF THE DIVINITY OF OUR BLESSED LORD, but THE NATURE OF THAT PROOF, so far as it may illustrate the present branch of the proposed inquiry, THE USE, NAMELY, OF THE SCRIPTURES

AND THE CHURCH TOGETHER, IN ORDER TO THE  
ATTAINMENT OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

I. For I have been endeavouring hitherto to lay a broad foundation for a very simple but very important principle ; a principle, indeed, with which you have become, of late years especially, perfectly familiar, but which is still denied in theory by many of our brethren, or neglected in their practice ; whilst the opposite theory, even when it is not directly acted upon, seriously and injuriously affects their views of revealed truth, and of the proofs of Christian doctrines. This principle is *the Use and Importance*, not to say the *Necessity, of the teaching of the Church of Christ as an Introduction to the truths of the Gospel*. And the Scriptures themselves, and of both Testaments, the Old as well as the New, have been shewn to bear upon the establishment of this great practical principle. For we collected, in the first place, several Indications both from the external history of the New Testament, and from its internal form and structure, tending to prove the design and intention of its inspired authors, or rather of Him who inspired them, that the Church should supply that Introduction to the Sacred Volume which of itself it presupposes and requires<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Sermon II.

And, again, from a rapid survey of the varied contents of the Old Testament, the History, the Law, the Psalms and Prophets, it was inferred that the Old Scriptures were in harmony with this design<sup>b</sup>; and whilst they formed altogether a vast and most important preparation for the Gospel, yet were they not intended to supply the usual and natural Introduction to the Gospel-doctrines; which were rather to be taught by the Church, proved by the New Testament, illustrated and confirmed by the Old.

1. But up to this point I have studiously regarded this Introductory teaching of the Christian Church as *without authority*:—and this, not because it is altogether, or always, or usually, destitute of all authority, but because it *may* have only the slightest possible authority, or none at all; and because the total absence of authority does not prevent the first and leading use of this Introduction to the knowledge of the truth.

It is a plain matter of fact, that from the days of the Apostles down to our own, every Christian, almost without exception, has been thus introduced to every Christian doctrine, antecedently to the study of the Scriptures; and it is of no slight importance to dwell upon the fact, prior to any consideration of the authority, or the degree

<sup>b</sup> Sermon III.

of authority, to which such an introductory suggestion of the truth may or may not be entitled. Does the Romanist, for example, affirm, that “the fundamental principle which Protestantism proposes as its basis, is, the individual examination and discovery of its doctrines in the word of God;” or does any Protestant writer incautiously assume it to be the duty whether of Churches or of Individuals to “draw out” of the Scriptures for themselves the articles of the Christian faith<sup>c</sup>; or is the alleged indirectness of the Christian Scriptures the occasion of distressing doubt to the believer, or a ground of objection with the unbeliever;—in any one of these cases let us before all things advert to the fact, that another method of discovering the truth, that is to say of receiving the statement of the truth in the first instance, is, and ever has been, in continual operation. Whatever imaginary instances Lord Bacon and others may have supposed<sup>d</sup> of conversions to Christianity effected by the Scriptures alone, neither accompanied nor introduced by the teaching of Christian men, the actual cases of this kind have been exceptions to the common

<sup>c</sup> Dr. Wiseman’s Lectures at Moorfields, vol. i. p. 27. Mr. Benson’s Discourses on Tradition, &c. p. 6, 14.

<sup>d</sup> See the New Atlantis, Lord Bacon’s Works, vol. iii. p. 241 (1730). Rev. W. D. Conybeare’s Bampton Lecture I. p. 35, 36. Preface to Saurin’s Sermons, translated by Robinson, vol. iii. p. 23, 24.

rule, and exceptions of rare occurrence. For the most part, it is almost impossible that the Christian should have first discovered for himself in the Scriptures any one of the great leading doctrines of Christianity. From some source or other of human uninspired instruction the statement of the doctrine will have been first presented to his mind; and it cannot be his duty to make that discovery of the truth originally in the Scriptures, in which he must of necessity have been anticipated in consequence of the very existence of the Christian Church, and the natural constitution of human society. It can only be his duty to compare the statement with the proof, and ascertain, as he best may, and doubtless with the best advantages within his power, that the statement which he has received from the Church is supported by the authority of Revelation.

Looking to that continual stream of oral and uninspired instruction, which, in point of fact, has ever conveyed from age to age the truths of the Gospel, and with the view of marking its perpetual succession and continuity, which is indeed an instance of a gracious and merciful provision for our necessities, we might, perhaps, venture to denote it by the term "Tradition;" but if so, we must be careful to add, that it is Tradition "Unauthoritative." And this, not merely to distinguish it from that authoritative

Tradition, whose usurping or ambiguous claims have so frequently perplexed the Church of Christ, but also because it is not essential to the use of that Introductory teaching of which we speak, that it should possess any authority at all. Any particular tradition, in the common sense of the word, depends for its use and value upon the degree of authority which it may justly claim. And we must ascertain its authority before we can adopt or employ it. This Tradition, on the contrary, if we may apply the term to that constant stream of oral teaching, by which, in fact, the doctrines of the Gospel have ever been suggested, and primarily introduced to the minds of men, has its use, not on account of its authority, but of its office in suggesting the truth.

Nay, and there are cases in which it may be entitled to no just authority. The truth may be first suggested to us, for example, by one to whom we owe no deference in respect of his age, wisdom, learning, character, office, or relation; or the statement of a doctrine may be derived to us from a Christian Society greatly and manifestly corrupt in doctrine and practice; or we cannot but know, perhaps, that different individuals or different Churches advance conflicting statements, and if we are utterly unable to hold the balance of contending authorities, it is to us as if either statement were

presented to our minds altogether devoid of authority.

And yet it may be, and surely it is, a very merciful dispensation of Providence, and a gracious appointment of our Lord and Saviour, by which we are not directed to His written word for the primary intimation of the truth; but man is to teach man; and upon no one is the arduous duty imposed of drawing out for himself originally the truths of Revelation. It may be of vital consequence to us thus to have received the statement of some important doctrine, and so to proceed to the investigation of its truth; not merely because the doctrine itself might have been overlooked by the unassisted student of the Scriptures, had it not been thus presented to his mind; but further, because, as has been more than once observed before, the character of the proof itself of the doctrine is immediately affected by this combination of the unauthoritative statement, with the authoritative Scriptural proof. What might have seemed oblique or indistinct in the Scriptures, nay painfully so even to the Christian believer, whilst they were supposed to be the sole fountain both of the statement and the proof, now becomes luminous, and powerful, and irrefragable, when regarded merely as the proof of a doctrine, the statement of which was by the Divine intention and appointment to be supplied from another source.

And thus, I doubt not, has the great truth of the Divinity of the Messiah been introduced to the knowledge of many a devout and sincere inquirer, who has then perceived the full force of the Scriptural proof of the doctrine, has bowed to the indisputable authority of Revelation, has believed and adored.

2. But not every mind passes on by a path so smooth and direct to the acceptance of this high and mysterious doctrine, exposed to no painful trials from distressing doubts or perplexing objections. And has the Church nothing further to present to the inquirer besides this Unauthoritative Introduction to the truth? Are there no considerations to be offered to him, intervening between the mere statement of the truth and its proof by Scripture, and calculated to relieve his difficulties, and assist his progress? Assuredly there are. And here of course it is that many would introduce the Authority of the Church, if not to remove his doubts, yet to silence them; some, as the Romanists, generally, with respect to every doctrine which the Church professes to teach; others only with reference to a particular class of Christian truths, of which this doctrine would undoubtedly be one. The general subject, however, of the Authority of the Church will be more conveniently considered upon a future occasion. At present I would only advert to



certain presumptive arguments in favour of the Divinity of our blessed Lord, (and applicable also to other doctrines in various measures and degrees,) probabilities in support of it, or improbabilities opposed to a contrary conclusion, of such a kind as must, in the judgment of a reasonable mind, affect the estimate of the nature or amount of the proof itself.

Of this class is the general, the almost universal, reception of the truth, not in this country alone or in this age, but to the East and West, and North and South, throughout all Christendom in every Church, and from our own times upwards, so far as the records of Christianity extend; overcast only, from time to time, by dark but passing clouds of unbelief, or interrupted by the dissentient voices not of any national Church, but of individuals, or of small societies.

Does any one doubt whether a presumption of this nature ought to be entertained at all by the free unprejudiced inquirer?—Let him only for one moment consider what would have been the natural and just effect of opposite circumstances. Suppose that now, in our own age, eighteen centuries after the Revelation of the Gospel, the Divinity of Messiah had been put forth as the new discovery of some diligent student of the Scriptures: what a weight of argument and evidence would be required to induce any one to

believe, that so momentous a doctrine had up to this day lain dormant in the book of Revelation ! Or suppose that the general belief of all ages and Churches had not extended beyond the simple Humanity of Messiah, and that His Divinity had been maintained only by a few zealous men, not without learning and ingenuity, but whose efforts and talents had never achieved any thing more than a limited and occasional success, had never won the consent of a single National Church : would not a reasonable mind consider their ill success as some argument against their creed ?—Then is there *some* deference naturally due to the general belief of the Church at large ; and universal consent, or an approximation to it, justly affects our estimate of the nature and amount of the Scriptural proof of doctrine. It is but an ineffectual struggle against Nature and against Providence, to maintain a contrary position. We cannot, if we would, undo the natural and social ties which link our minds to those of other men. And whosoever, through a blind fear of prejudice, attempts to insulate himself, and study the Scriptures as if they had been unknown before, will fail indeed in his attempt ; but, in so far as it is successful, he will have thrown away advantages, for the just use of which he is and must be responsible.

But may not the general assent to the doctrine have been indolent, passive, uninquiring ?—Then

in proportion to the zeal and judgment, the honesty, intelligence, and piety, with which the proof has been investigated, will the presumption in favour of the doctrine gain strength. If that branch of the Church of England, for example, which has taken root in the United States, is known to have considered and revised the Book of Common Prayer, and to have judged it better not to retain the use of the Athanasian Creed in her public services, still retaining her full belief in the doctrines of that Creed, shall we not presume that the ground of those doctrines was reconsidered at the same time? But how much more if we look back to the æra of the Reformation, and observe the whole of Western Christendom engaged in one monstrous discussion concerning the first principles of faith and worship?—vast powers, and vast erudition, the piety and intrepidity of Martyrs, all brought to bear upon the great truths of the Gospel, their import, definition, and proof—and the result of those awful discussions, in every Church, the solemn and repeatedly renewed asseveration of the truth of this great doctrine. Is it possible that any one can take into his hands any collection of the Confessions of Faith put forth by the various Protestant Churches at this momentous æra, and observe their agreement with one another and with the Universal Church, their absolute unity as to this truth, and I may

add as to all the other connected doctrines touching the mystery of the Unity in Trinity, and still believe that there is nothing in this remarkable consent of judgments? that he is to examine the proof of doctrine as if it were altogether new, and none of his race had examined it before?—Naturally, and reasonably, on the contrary, do several of these Confessions of Faith, as those of Helvetia, Augsburg, Saxony, in the very midst of their appeals to Scripture, their assertions of the Sufficiency of Holy Scripture, their repudiation of human Traditions, and their remonstrances against Romish Errors, dwell nevertheless upon their having retained the true Scriptural faith of the Church Catholic<sup>c</sup>. The force, meanwhile, of their unanimity in this doctrine, it is obvious, is greatly heightened by their pointed discrepancies upon other subjects. Compare, for example, the Confessions and Articles of faith of the Churches of England and Scotland, differing exceedingly not merely in some important particulars, but in their general tone and spirit; or compare all the Confessions of the Protestant Churches with one another, and again with those of the Greek

<sup>c</sup> See the "Sylloge Confessionum," (Oxford, 1804.) Preface to the Helvetic Confession, p. 10, 15. cf. Art. II. p. 18, 19. The Confession of Augsburg, p. 127. cf. Art. XV. p. 137. and the Epilogus, p. 196. Of Saxony, Preface, p. 205, 206. 207, 208, 209. cf. 280.

Church and the Church of Rome, and consider their disagreement upon so many points even of great importance, and their universal agreement in this doctrine, and judge whether some deference is not justly due to a unanimity so remarkable in itself, and amidst circumstances so remarkable.

All these things are known to almost every one who is likely to approach the proof of the Divinity of our Lord with misgivings and mistrust; but some may ascend higher towards the source, and trace the doctrine to primitive times. Not that it is to be desired of every inquirer that he should study the history and decrees of Councils, and examine the copious remains of Christian Antiquity at all; much less that he should do so prior to his examination of the Scriptures themselves. But at a very little cost of learning and labour certain facts may be ascertained sufficient to establish a presumption in favour of the doctrine received and taught by the Church, and to weaken the effect of adverse prejudices. Is it asserted, for instance, by modern Unitarian writers, that the Fathers of the first three centuries were generally Unitarians, and believers in the simple humanity of Jesus Christ<sup>d</sup>? It is easy to ascertain,

<sup>d</sup> Lindsey's Apology, p. 23, 24. Belsham's Calm Inquiry, p. 255, cited by Dr. Burton, Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Divinity of Christ, Introduction, p. viii.

on the contrary, not only, what is notorious, that early in the fourth century His Divinity was the distinct and deliberately asserted belief of the Church, but that the Confessions of faith of that century were professedly the transcript of those truths which had been handed down in the Church; that these Creeds were the results of actual discussion and conferences, occasioned by tenets of a different description maintained indeed by many but condemned as heretical by the majority of the Bishops and Clergy of every branch of the universal Church; that the very heresies, however, of primitive times were Trinitarian in their character, indicating the truth whilst they misconceived it; (for what indeed are the errors of the Docetæ, of Eutyches and Nestorius, and Sabellius, nay what are the vain efforts of the Arians ancient or modern, but indirect attestations and reluctant testimonies to the true doctrine?) and that finally, looking back from these unhappy discussions, we can even now trace the doctrine of the Divinity of the Messiah in writer after writer throughout each preceding century up to the very age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles: and this not as the belief of those individuals alone, but frequently as the expression of the faith professed by the Church at large, and not in one country alone, but at Antioch, Sardis, Ephesus, Athens, Rome,

Carthage, Alexandria, in almost every branch of the then existing Church<sup>e</sup>.

Important, however, as facts like these would be in any case, their importance is immeasurably enhanced by the nature of the doctrine itself<sup>f</sup>. Granted that in many things many Churches have erred, and that no one in particular, nor all of them together, or speaking by their bishops or representatives in General Councils, are infallibly secured from error, yet is there some meaning, and we must repose some confidence, in the glorious predictions of the Prophets, and the merciful promises of the Lord Himself. In some sense He is to be with His Church always even unto the end of the world. But if every Church has indeed throughout every age erred to this extent, and not merely has Heathenism been overthrown, but the true faith of the Jew has been set aside, only to make way for a blasphemous and degrading superstition, the adoration of the creature, the worship of a mere man, then must we confess that Revelation, as a Revelation, has signally and altogether failed. We have no other alternative. We must either admit the total failure of the Christian revelation, as a Revelation of the truth, or we must recognise a presumption, and a very strong pre-

<sup>e</sup> See Dr. Burton's Testimonies, &c.: and note at the end.

<sup>f</sup> See Waterland, Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, ch. vi. vii. Works, vol. v.

sumption, in favour of the doctrine of the Divinity of our blessed Lord.

II. Is then the teaching of the Church infallible? Or is Tradition after all the ground upon which we rest the doctrine? Far otherwise. Let us hold to the Scriptures. Upon them let the proof be established. Only let us not consult them at a disadvantage by no means designed by their Divine Author, but gratuitously introduced by man, in contravention to His gracious purpose. And what has hitherto been stated, or rather briefly hinted, and just sufficiently touched upon, it is hoped, to exhibit the nature of the subject, may indicate the mode in which the Scriptural Proof should be *approached*, and how it should be *examined and applied*.

1. For with what frame of mind should we in all reason *approach the consideration of the proof* of a doctrine, in whose behalf such strong antecedent presumptions are advanced? It is not merely that in any case the whole character of the proof is altered, when what might have otherwise appeared unaccountably oblique and indirect, is found to have been ever preceded, and accompanied, and intended to be so, by statements of the truth as direct and explicit as could even be desired: but in the instance of a



doctrine so important in itself, and so examined and received as this has been, to approach the proof of it without the utmost seriousness, and docility, and even self-distrust, becomes altogether irrational, and plainly presumptuous.

Be it so that the Church in the Nicene period was too subtle and curious in her definitions of doctrine; or that instead of repressing the Heretic in his daring speculations, she has sometimes presumed to follow him, and cope with him, upon ground too holy for human tread; or that she has set too great store occasionally by the exact enunciation of mysterious truths, and neglected the weightier matters of the law—if these things be so, and I fear, to a certain extent, they are—whilst they speak of human infirmity, they tell also of so much anxious thought employed upon the mysteries of faith, as may well demand our gratitude in some instances, and always deference and respect. Rate the inherent difficulty and improbability of the doctrine at the highest possible amount,—and we must not measure that improbability, as it may appear to other minds, by the facility with which we may have embraced the truth ourselves—still reason and religion alike forbid the hasty dismissal of the proof, and that of course a cumulative proof, because the inquirer thinks he has discovered here and there a flaw, a weakness, an

absurdity.—“ We think that the phrase ‘ God manifest in the flesh ’ is a corruption ; we are confident that the text of the heavenly witnesses is an interpolation ; for ‘ in the beginning was the Word ’ we have an interpretation different from that of the Church ; we acknowledge no proof of the Divinity of Messiah in His assertion, ‘ I and my Father are one,’ since the unity of Christ and His disciples is expressed in terms of exactly the same import.”—After this manner, it is greatly to be feared, and upon such grounds as these, have some presumed to cast away the faith of the Universal Church, and never enter upon the full and calm consideration of its proof in the Scriptures. And this is most irrational. It is irrational even if some of the arguments alleged in its support are utterly baseless, or unsound. One man, for example, would reason in favour of the Unity in Trinity, from the traces of Trinitarian notions amidst the superstitions of the East, which may appear to other minds even to militate against his conclusion<sup>g</sup>; another argues that infinite justice required an infinite sacrifice, and therefore the Saviour was Divine, whereas the contrary argument would be no less valid, in other words both would be equally fallacious, if it were replied that the sins of finite

<sup>g</sup> Bishop Tomline (after Mr. Maurice) on the 39 Articles, Article I. Elements of Theology, vol. ii. p. 73.

beings required only a finite sacrifice, wherefore the Saviour was not Divine<sup>h</sup>.

Nothing of this kind will move a reasonable man from the plain path of duty. He will feel assured, that the faith of the Universal Church has not been established upon arguments like these. He will "search the Scriptures" patiently and thoroughly "whether these things be so." To weigh and analyze the Scriptural proof with all carefulness may now appear to him a more important duty, but it would in any case have been his duty. And the more startling the doctrine to his mind, the more difficult it appears to him to conceive of such a manifestation of God as this, the union of the Divine and Human natures in the person of Messiah, the eternal Word made very man, "God manifest in the flesh"—so much the less will he deem it probable, that such a doctrine could have been acknowledged, and maintained, century after century, by "the holy Church throughout all the world," without an overwhelming proof in the word of Revelation.

2. To display that proof in its full proportions upon the present occasion would be unnecessary,

<sup>h</sup> See Mr. Veysie's Bampton Lecture, Sermon I. p. 23, 24. and Archbishop Magee's Dissertations on Atonement and Sacrifice. Yet the argument has been formally employed, subsequently to the exposure of its fallacy by these able writers.

and is in truth impossible. Whoever would investigate it aright, must search the Scriptures themselves. He must not only search them for single texts, but thoroughly study and peruse the Scriptures. Every even the fullest collection of single texts and insulated passages impairs the proper force of the proof, which depends upon the combined effect of the whole; upon the manner in which the doctrine which the Church declares is not merely taught in the book of Revelation, but is assumed, and implied, and interwoven, as it were, with its very texture.

But, as has been said, carefully to weigh and analyze the Scriptural proof, is the very duty of the devout inquirer. And with a view to the more complete illustration of the use of the Scriptures and the Church together, in the investigation of sacred truth, it may not be unprofitable even now to offer a few suggestions upon *the mode in which the declarations of Holy Writ should be examined, and should be applied more or less directly, in proof of the teaching of the Church.*

Thus, having admitted that Jesus Christ was indeed a Prophet sent from God, we naturally turn, in the first place, to His own declarations concerning His own office and person. But supposing Him to be in truth "God dwelling among us," we could not expect that He should openly declare his Divine nature so long as He

appeared in this world under the veil of the nature of man. His words upon earth would rather be strange, startling, and mysterious, fitted to excite awful expectations of the truth, such as devout men would muse upon, and lay up in their hearts, even until He was exalted and glorified. Such a preparation for the doctrine, accordingly, we discover not merely in some few insulated passages, but even in His usual and accustomed turns of expression. To this purpose is His frequent designation of Himself, as “the Son,” as contrasted with “the Father,” and that Father the Most High. “All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” “But of that day and that hour knoweth no one, no not the Angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” He does not employ this language merely in parables,—“last of all He sent unto them His Son;” “having yet one Son, His well-beloved,”—but in His most explicit declarations of fact and doctrine; “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world—God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.

For the Father judgeth no one, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son ; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.” “ The Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” “ Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son <sup>h</sup>.”—And not only is the truth implied in our Lord’s continual use of the expressions, “ the Son,” “ the Son of God,” “ the only-begotten Son of God,” it is indicated again, in His other remarkable designation of Himself, as “ the Son of man,” which is evidently employed to signify that He was also more than man. “ The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins ;” “ the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day ;” “ of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels ;” “ the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them ;” “ the Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.” “ What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before ?” “ no one hath ascended up into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven <sup>i</sup>.” This

<sup>h</sup> Matt. xi. 27. Luke x. 22. Mark xiii. 32. Matt. xxi. 37. Mark xii. 6. John iii. 16, 17. v. 19—23. vi. 40. viii. 35, 36. xiv. 13.

<sup>i</sup> Matt. ix. 6. xii. 8. Mark viii. 38. (cf. Matt. xvi. 27. xxv.

designation, in a word, implies His humiliation ; and His humiliation implies His previous glory ; and the seeming paradox of a great advocate of the faith is justified, “ The title of the Son of man belongs to Him as God the Son, the title of the Son of God belongs to Him as man<sup>k</sup>.”

But these frequent and yet peculiar expressions<sup>l</sup> are only unfolded, or rather preparation is made for their being fully unfolded at the proper time, in those passages which plainly invite the attention of the people to the dignity of Messiah’s person. As in the text, “ What think ye of Christ ? Whose Son is He ?” And when the Pharisees reply in terms applicable only to His human nature, they are expressly remanded to their own Scriptures, and pressed with the argument, “ If David then call Him

31. Luke ix. 26. Zech. xiv. 5. Jude 14. John xvii. 5.) Luke ix. 56. John v. 27. vi. 62. iii. 13.

<sup>k</sup> Bp. Horsley, Sermon xiii. Works, vol. i. p. 261. See note at the end.

<sup>l</sup> Of the expression “ the Son of man,” it is observed by Archdeacon Paley, that it “ is in all the Evangelists found under the peculiar circumstance, of being applied by Christ to Himself, but of never being used of Him, or towards Him, by any other person. It occurs seventeen times in St. Matthew’s Gospel, twelve times in St. Mark’s, twenty-one times in St. Luke’s, and eleven times in St. John’s, and always with this restriction.” Evidences, part ii. ch. 4. Contrast with this the expressions used by our Lord in Rev. i. 8. 11. 17, 18, &c.

Lord, how is He his son?"—To the same purpose the question to the Disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" and the emphatic blessing pronounced upon St. Peter for that confession of faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," which in effect declared that He was both the Son of man and the Son of God. And again, the striking instances, more than once or twice recorded, in which our Lord intentionally adopts expressions, which to those who knew not His Divine nature must, and did, appear profane and blasphemous, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am;" "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" "The Father is in me, and I in Him;" "I and my Father are one<sup>m</sup>." Does the Unitarian say, and say correctly, that the forms of expression in the two verses last cited, being precisely the same with those in which our Saviour would describe the union of His disciples with one another and with God, they cannot be adduced in proof of His Divine nature? Nevertheless, how were they understood at the time? "For a good work," said the Jews, "we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." We are not therefore to cite words like these

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xxii. 41—45. xvi. 13—20. John viii. 58. v. 18. x. 29—39. (cf. John xvii. 11. 22.) xvii. 5. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.



apart from their context, as distinct propositions. Viewed in their place, and with their context, and with their effect upon the hearers considered, and that effect clearly foreseen by our Lord, they become arguments of His meaning and intention. They harmonize with those continual designations of Himself before alluded to, they are parts of one common plan. And that awful sense assigned to them at first by the Jews, and by the Church ever afterwards, what is it but a solution of other expressions otherwise inexplicable? as in our Lord's latest prayer and last command, "And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was;" and, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Explained by the doctrine of the Church, all these passages are consistent and intelligible. And however difficult that doctrine, it is at least incomparably more easy than to suppose a mere man, being yet a Prophet, a true and inspired Prophet, thus to speak and to pray, and to command His Disciples thus to be baptized, according to the Socinian hypothesis, into the name of God, and of a man, and of a Divine energy or operation.

But once more let the text claim our attention. It directs our thoughts to another source of proof, sometimes, perhaps, too much insisted upon,

sometimes unaccountably omitted<sup>o</sup>, the indications, namely, of the doctrine in the Old Testament.

For the Divinity of Messiah is not only not a discovery of these later days, it was not altogether a new doctrine even at the first preaching of our Lord. True it had been shrouded in thick clouds and darkness, scarcely to be penetrated except by the direct beams of the Gospel; yet glimpses of the truth seem to have been caught by pious men in earlier times. Thus the Son of Sirach, for example, appears to have apprehended the words of the text in the sense indicated by Christ Himself<sup>p</sup>. But the text does not stand alone. I forbear indeed to allege some of the passages with which it has been supposed to be connected<sup>q</sup>. Nor would I even venture to support this doctrine, or that of the Trinity in

<sup>o</sup> As by Dr. Clarke in his Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity.

<sup>p</sup> See Eccus. li. 10. (15.) and notes by Arnald; and by Drusius and others in the Critici Sacri.

<sup>q</sup> As in the following note upon Eccus. li. 15. *Κυρίου μου* Filium Dei intelligit, ut Gen. xix. 24. Ps. ii. 7. cx. 1. Prov. xxx. 4. (in quem locum consule epist. D. Aug. 49. ad Deograt.) Dan. ix. 17. Hoescelius apud Crit. Sacr. in loc. And to the same purpose, W. Lowth, and Waldo on Dan. ix. 17. who suppose the Prophet to pray in the name of Christ, "for the Lord's sake." But this seems rash criticism. It is more probable that the expression is equivalent to that in v. 19. "defer not for thine own sake, O my God." It is one thing to believe that the Prophets prophesied of Christ as the "Lord," and quite another to imagine that they prayed in His name. This belongs to the last dispensation. See John xvi. 24.

Unity, by any of the passages commonly cited from the history of the Creation and other parts of the Historical Scriptures; the inferences from which, if they can satisfy the believer, are much too precarious to convince the unbeliever<sup>r</sup>. In the Psalms and Prophets, on the contrary, there are many expressions parallel with the text, and equally applicable to Messiah. As in the Psalms, “The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.”—And Isaiah, “A Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” Again, “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” And again, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God:—say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” And Jeremiah, “This is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord (that is, Jehovah) our Righteousness.” Zechariah, “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.” And Malachi, “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight

<sup>r</sup> As Gen. i. 2. 26. xviii. 1, 2. 22. xix. 1. 24.

in; behold He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts'."—Now these are but a few out of many passages in which the Messiah (as learned Jews themselves acknowledge<sup>1</sup>) is named "Jehovah," or is in various ways represented by the Prophets as God, as the Lord, as Immanuel, "God with us;" the presence of God among His people (and this in some far higher and more glorious sense than before, and which the Church understands, and cannot but understand, partly of the manifestation of God in Christ, partly of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our souls) being one of the very signs and characteristics of Evangelical prophecy. But to ascertain the application of several of these passages requires some familiarity with the genius of the Prophe-tical writings, and much exact comparison of Scripture with Scripture, sometimes indeed of the New Scriptures with the Old. Wherefore texts of this kind are rather to be sought out at a later period in *confirmation* of the doctrine by those who have already embraced it. Such texts as have been cited, on the contrary, are obvious

\* Ps. ii. 2. 7. 12. (cf. 2 Sam. vii. 14.) Ps. xlv. 1. 6, 7. 11. (cf. xciii. 2. xcv. 6, 7.) Ps. cii. 25—27. (cf. ver. 16—22. ciii. Is. lx. 1.) Is. vii. 14. (cf. Matt. i. 22, 23. Luke i. 31—34.) ix. 6, 7. (xi. 1—9.) xl. 3—11. Jer. xxiii. 5—8. Zech. ii. 10, 11. (ix. 9, 10. Zeph. iii. 14—20.) Mal. iii. 1.

<sup>1</sup> See Bp. Pearson on the Creed, Art. II. note, p. 148, 149. Ed. fol. 1676; and Parkhurst's Heb. Lexicon on the word יהוה.

and direct ; not always secure, it is true, against the captious criticism of a Socinus or a Crellius, but yet of a nature forcibly to arrest the attention of the devout inquirer, and oblige him to confess that our Lord did not refer him to the Old Testament for some solitary indication of his Divinity. But if so, let him consider what an extraordinary force we must needs ascribe to passages of such an import, when they are found in the very midst of unnumbered declarations of the incommunicable majesty of God, ever emphatically described in the Old Scriptures as the “jealous God,” who “will not give his glory to another<sup>s</sup>.”

Then let him return to the Gospels, and observe the Saviour not simply speaking, but acting as Divine ; familiarly displaying even during His sojourn in the flesh the attributes of God. I do not cite His Miracles in direct attestation of His Divinity. Directly they only attest His truth and His Divine Commission ; and cannot be alleged in proof of His Divine Nature, until it can be shewn, which is impossible, that such miraculous powers could not be communicated to a finite being. Yet the nature of some of our Lord’s miracles, the occasions of others, and the manner in which they were usually wrought, have been always taken, and with reason, as remarkable

\* Exod. xx. 5, &c. &c. Is. xlii. 8. xliv. 6. xlviii. 11. See note at the end.

corroborations of His own expressions, and those of Holy Writ concerning Him. Was it believed that God alone could forgive sins? was the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Most High? was it emphatically written of God, that He “createth the wind, stilleth the noise of the seas, treadeth on the waves of the seas, declareth unto man what is his thought, revealeth secrets?”—the Son of man also walks upon the sea, controls the waves, communicates miraculous powers, inspires the Holy Spirit, knows all thoughts, and discovers that He knows them<sup>1</sup>. Why, one such instance happening to us as to Nathanael, would have doubtless forced from us as from him the instant confession, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” And it was but the natural effect of other miracles upon the minds of men who knew the Scriptures, by which they were prompted to those expressions of wonder and awe, “Who is this that forgiveth sins also?” “What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” “What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out,” or which

<sup>1</sup> Compare Amos iv. 13. Ps. cxxxix. 2. Dan. ii. 28. Job ix. 8. Ps. lxxv. 7. lxxix. 9. cvii. 29. Is. xlii. 25. with Matt. ix. 4. xii. 25. Luke vi. 8. xi. 17. John i. 48, 49. xiii. 1. 11. xvii. 19. xviii. 4. (Heb. iv. 12, 13.) Matt. viii. 26, 27. xiv. 25—33. Mark iv. 40. vi. 48—52. viii. 17, 18. Luke iv. 36. viii. 24, 25. x. 17. 19. John xx. 22. Matt. ix. 2—8. Mark ii. 3—12. Luke vii. 49.

threw His disciples at His feet, exclaiming, “ Of a truth thou art the Son of God.” Yet this was not all: to heighten this impression, and to justify it, He confirmed by express miracles His most remarkable assertions of Divine authority. He causes the sick of the palsy to take up his bed and walk, to this end, that they might “ know that the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins.” He not only asserts that He “ has power to lay down His life, and has power to take it up again,” but thereupon He is “ declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.” He not only breathes upon His disciples, and saith, “ Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” promises that He will come to them, and be ever with them, promises that when He is departed He will send the Holy Spirit from the Father, but after His departure He fulfils these glorious promises, and visibly sheds forth those manifest gifts of the Spirit, which are an earnest of His unseen presence in the Church “ even unto the end of the world.”

Now the effect of these considerations is twofold. They go far of themselves to establish the truth of that mysterious confession of the Church, “ that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man;” but they do more. They so

“ Matt. ix. 2—8. John ii. 19. x. 19. Rom. i. 4. Matt. xxviii. 20. John xx. 22. xiv. 16, 17, 18. 23. 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7. Acts ii. 33. Eph. iv. 8.

prepare the mind for the teaching of the Apostles, that it appears little more than the natural expansion and application of what had been taught before. Do the Apostles continually assume and imply the truth of the doctrine? We can no longer dream, as the sceptic has dreamed, that St. Paul indeed and St. John believed in it, but that they were mistaken. What is that mistake, which is common to Apostles and Prophets and to our Lord? Is not Revelation itself upon such terms a thing impossible? Or do they assert the doctrine in the most startling terms, or do they act upon it, worship Him, pray to Him, bless His people in His name conjointly with those of the Father and of the Holy Spirit? We can hear none of these things with an air of suspicion and distrust. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him." And yet "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;"—"by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist," and yet "He is the head of the body, the Church;"—"being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God:" and yet "He



made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men :” “ He took not on Him the nature of angels ; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham : forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” Nevertheless, He is “ the first and the last ;” “ glory and dominion are unto Him for ever and ever ;” the Baptist acknowledges, “ He that cometh from above is above all ;” Thomas addresses Him, as “ his Lord, and his God ;” Stephen, “ full of the Holy Ghost,” breathes his last prayer to Him, and to Him commends his spirit ; even to Christ “ who is over all,” says St. Paul, “ God blessed for ever. Amen <sup>x</sup>.”—None of these things, I say, however mysterious, can we receive with suspicion or distrust, when we also are full of the language of the Holy Spirit, speaking not only by Evangelists and Apostles, but by the Prophets of old, and in our Lord Himself. The only thing we can distrust, is that minute and captious criticism, which labours to invalidate the force of here and there a solitary expression, and forgets the tenour of the whole collective and harmonious proof ; for we feel that the structure of our faith

<sup>x</sup> John i. 1. 3. 14. Col. i. 15—20. Phil. ii. 5—11. Heb. ii. 14. 16. Rev. i. 6. 11. 13. 17. ii. 8. xxi. 6, 7. cf. Is. xli. 4. xlv. 6. xlviii. 12. John iii. 31. xx. 28. Acts vii. 55—60. Rom. ix. 5.

is strong and sure, built upon the foundation of the Scriptures, New and Old, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.

After this manner then is the doctrine of the Church to be established by the authority of Holy Scripture. Not of course that the particular method of investigation here suggested is the only or the best method to be observed. It is but one out of many lines of argument tending to the same conclusion. Nor let it ever be imagined that any investigation of Scripture whatsoever, which rests in the mere collection of texts, and does not proceed to the diligent, and continuous, and devout study of the whole book of God's word, is to be recommended at all. But supposing such a faithful and pious study of Holy Writ, then after this manner by comparison of Scripture with Scripture, and of the New Testament with the Old; weighing well the force and design not of mere words, but of passages taken together with their context, and illustrated by others, all equally proceeding from the same Inspiration, may we hope, by the Divine blessing, to attain the truth:—yet not even thus, if we regard the truth as if it were now for the first time proposed, or ourselves as if we were the first to consult the word of God; but accepting from the Church gladly yet not blindly, modestly yet not implicitly, what God has enabled her to offer;

that is to say, first the statement of the truth itself, and next a strong presumptive argument in its behalf. For not to accept these advantages with every other aid which our brethren and our fathers in the faith can bestow, what is it but to throw away blessings for which we are responsible, desert the advantageous position in which God has placed us, and worship independence at the hazard of truth ?

So much at present for the combined use of the Scriptures and the Church in the attainment of truth of *doctrine*. And what has been here observed with reference to one great doctrine, will be easily applied, with the requisite modifications, to every other. The relation, on the other hand, of the Church to the Scriptures, with respect to external *ordinances and institutions*, will demand a separate consideration.

But let us not rise from the contemplation of that awful and amazing doctrine which has now engaged our attention, without reflecting, though but for a moment, upon the serious duty which it imposes upon us in exact proportion to our belief in its own intrinsic importance, and in the use of the Christian Church in establishing its truth.

The more highly we estimate the vast importance of the doctrine, (and to estimate it too highly, nay to esteem it sufficiently, is utterly

impossible,) the more devoutly cautious let us ever be to rest its importance upon true and Scriptural grounds. And the more we discountenance an unnatural independence in the pursuit of Christian truth, and extol the use and necessity of those advantages which the Church confers upon the devout inquirer, so much the more scrupulously let us guard,—I do not say against intentional irreverence in our treatment of so high a mystery, that in a devout believer is impossible,—but against every thing which may obstruct the proper use of Christian teaching, by promoting irreverence in other minds.

Therefore let us avoid, so far as we may, not merely the fanciful or incautious argument which the rash inquirer may easily turn aside, and together with it throw aside the truth itself, but the dry disquisition, the subtle distinction, the vain attempt at theory and explanation, nay even, in ordinary cases and so far as we safely can, the exact and precise Theological statement. Doubtless it is the very office of the Church to state the truth directly, and clearly, and adapt her statements to every variety of human capacity. Yet even in this she ought to keep Scripture constantly in her view, and imitate Scripture, so far as she may, in the enunciation of Scriptural truth. Let us never forget the proneness of men, of the believer as well as the unbeliever, to seek to be wise above that which

is written, and to tamper with the simplicity of Revelation.

It is true again, this awful mystery, like every other doctrine of Revelation, is addressed to our reason: yet not in order to exercise the intellectual faculties, which indeed it baffles, confounds, overwhelms, but to purify our hearts, exalt our pious affections, and sanctify our lives; not to be explained, but believed; to be gratefully accepted, not curiously scanned. We may be driven in mere self-defence to exact distinctions and definitions; but they are fastnesses and strongholds in which we are unwillingly pent up, not the pleasant mansions of faith and love; checks and safeguards against error, not the devout expressions of gratitude and adoration. Woe to us if our faith in the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ rests only in a barren self-complacent orthodoxy, which is unhappily consistent with a heart full of all impurity and all uncharitableness. Vain, and worse than vain, noxious to others, pernicious to ourselves, is our belief, that the Eternal Son of God emptied Himself of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and came down upon earth to save us, and will hereafter come again in His own glory and the glory of His Father to be our Judge, unless it bring forth fruits of holiness, of love to our brethren and to all mankind, of deep humility and self-abasement,

of a devout fear and a heartfelt love of God, “who so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another;”—“looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; we beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

γ John iii. 16. 1 John iv. 10, 11, &c. Tit. ii. 13, 14. Jude 24, 25.

## S E R M O N   V.

—◆—  
Tit. i. 5.

FOR THIS CAUSE LEFT I THEE IN CRETE, THAT THOU  
SHOULDEST SET IN ORDER THE THINGS THAT ARE  
WANTING, AND ORDAIN ELDERS IN EVERY CITY, AS I  
HAD APPOINTED THEE.

FOR gracious purposes, and with a manifest accommodation to the nature of man, it has pleased Almighty God to reveal His nature and will and ways, to a very remarkable extent, through the medium of *Historical records*. He has not merely declared the fact that He created the world, or that He is our Governor, or that He is Holy, Just, Faithful, Merciful; but He has set forth in order the history of the Creation, and displayed as it were in action His moral attributes, and disclosed the principles of His Providence by the living records of His government of mankind. And man's nature also has He mercifully caused to be laid bare and open to our view by the same impressive as well

as instructive process. We are not simply told what man was, or what he is; we are taught experimentally to know ourselves by the history of our race, the recorded conduct of our fathers under every variety of trial.

And the sad picture would have been incomplete, had not the method of the Old Testament been continued in the New. It was necessary that we should know the infirmities of Apostles, and the sins of the first saints, the errors and sins of men already members of Christ's body, living under the Sacraments, when Reconciliation had been effected, and the Saviour had ascended to His Father, and the Holy Spirit had made His abode in the Church. And not this alone; but the work of Redemption itself was effected by transactions and events, capable of being seen and known and recorded. The gracious work was accomplished not in heaven but on this earth; and we have the history of its accomplishment. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" we have, as it were, heard the Saviour's voice, observed His actions, witnessed His agony in the garden and His sufferings upon the cross, conversed with Him after His resurrection, seen His ascension into the heavens. Nay even the Dispensation of the Spirit, although His gracious influences are unseen and trackless as the winds, yet commences with historical transactions; a visible descent, mira-



culous powers displayed in their effects, a personal agency, interpositions of authority, express directions, frequently, to Evangelists and Apostles where and in what order to preach the word to Jew, or Samaritan, or Proselyte, or Gentile, and, continually, extraordinary gifts, the proofs and earnestness of unseen spiritual graces.

The foundations of Religion having thus been deeply laid, in the New Testament as well as in the Old, in Historical Narratives; and these singularly clear and direct, in style inimitable, surpassing in interest, and for the most part obvious in their application, the office of the Church is so far inconsiderable. She is indeed “a witness, and a keeper” of these as of the other portions of Holy Writ; she has to aid her members in their devout and profitable use of them; but she is scarcely called upon to introduce, or prepare the way for the sacred narratives. In general they speak at once to the conscience and the heart; are felt even by the child; and utter failure attends the efforts of inspired men, when they would substitute their language for that of the inspired Historians.

But Revelation is not only Historical, but also Doctrinal. God has not left us solely to the inferences, however important, which may be deduced from the sacred records, or the impressions, however deep, which they would en-

grave upon our souls. We have also those revealed truths or facts which are more especially termed *Doctrines*—whether results, which might possibly have been collected from the histories, touching the nature of God or man, as the doctrines of Providence or of Original Sin; or mysteries which could not be developed by the narratives, as the Pre-existence of Christ, His Divinity, the Personality of the Holy Spirit; or promises, and events to come, as the Resurrection of the body, a Future Judgment, Eternal Life; or the purposes and uses of facts past or present, for what end the Saviour died, or by what means we are to be justified, and sanctified, and saved.

And here the province of the Church has a wider range. She is not to content herself with placing the Bible in the hands of her babes in Christ, or of sinful men slow to receive, unwilling to “endure sound doctrine.” The Bible itself presumes that she will introduce and recommend the truth, suggest and state the doctrines, prepare the minds of men to accept them, adapt her statements to the various capacities of men, and to the various conditions of thought and of error at different periods. And this is her continual and abiding office, so long as the world shall endure. In a word, what Reason and the Moral Sense are to the Precepts of Religion, for which there is a na-

tural preparation in the hearts of men, that the Church is, and ever will be, to those Revealed Doctrines, for which we are not prepared by nature, nay, to the acceptance of which we are by nature indisposed.

And this office of the Christian Church we have already considered at length, and exemplified with respect to the doctrines of the Atonement, and the Divinity of our Lord.

But there is yet another merciful provision for the wants of human nature in Religious *Ordinances and Institutions*. Few and simple as are the Christian Rites and Institutions, as they proceeded from our Saviour and His Apostles, and striking as is the contrast in this respect between the Gospel and the Law; still the Gospel is not, and never was, devoid of appropriate and very important outward Ordinances. Nor are the Christian Institutions unconnected with Christian Truth, and therefore with our belief; and so far as this connexion extends, they come within the scope of an Inquiry into the means of attaining Christian Truth. This is the point, accordingly, which comes next in order; and we must now endeavour to develop the office and uses of the Christian Church with regard to THE TRUTHS IMMEDIATELY CONNECTED WITH THE CHRISTIAN ORDINANCES, or rather, as before, THE USES OF THE

CHURCH, in this respect, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THOSE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

I. Now it is obvious at once that the office of the Church is far more extensive in relation to Rites and Institutions, than in the instance of Doctrines. Less is prescribed to her; more, consequently, committed to her charge and her discretion. And it will easily appear, that the difference is in harmonious accordance with the circumstances of the two cases.—“Let all things be done unto edifying.” “Let all things be done decently and in order.” Such are the comprehensive directions addressed by St. Paul to the Church of Corinth; in the Church of Crete an individual is commissioned, as in the text, “to set in order the things that are wanting<sup>a</sup>.” Our Lord Himself prescribes two Rites, and only two; but neither does He nor do His Apostles bequeath to the Church any written instructions concerning the time or the details of their celebration.

Most unreasonable, indeed, would it be to imagine, that the Church was left at the close of the Apostles’ ministry with no other than these general directions, no models for the edifying and orderly administration of her Religious Ritual or Polity. Titus of course did “set in order” in the

<sup>a</sup> Tit. i. 5. 1 Cor. xiv. 26. 40. cf. 33, 34. xi. 16. 34.

Church of Crete “the things that were wanting.” St. Paul having given to the Corinthians some of the most important precepts respecting the celebration of the Eucharist, and having promised besides that “the rest he would set in order when he came,” did no doubt prescribe such points of order and decorum as would tend to check in practice as well as in principle any future profanation of that holy ordinance. Nevertheless it remains true, and it is generally admitted, that a very large discretion was still allowed to the Catholic Church, and to each of her separate branches, both then and thenceforward, respecting a variety of details connected with her Polity and her Public Worship; and even with those parts of her Polity or her Ritual, as the Sacraments, and the Orders of the Christian Ministry, which she confesses to be in their origin and essence of Divine appointment. Notwithstanding some trifling on such subjects, nay, worse than trifling, serious and unchristian dissensions occasionally occurring respecting Vestments, Postures, the sign of the Cross, the time of Easter, and the like, this is the conclusion almost universally acknowledged by the Churches of Christ. Almost all, for example, would assent to those positions of the Church of England, that “the Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies,” and that “the particular Forms of Divine worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies

appointed to be used therein, are things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged<sup>b</sup>.”

This part of the subject, accordingly, we may pass by, as relating rather to Order than to Truth; requiring only on the part of the Authorities of the Church the exercise of a sound discretion; on the part of the private Christian, in general, only a modest compliance with the established rules or customs of that branch of the Church of Christ in which he has been baptized, or that with which he may have occasion at any time to communicate.

It is otherwise when the Divine Origin or Obligation of a Rite or Institution, as of the Sacraments or Episcopacy, is the point in question; or when matter of Doctrine is immediately connected, or supposed to be connected, with a sacred ordinance, as Transubstantiation with the Eucharist. Truth is in such cases the object of investigation; and the means by which it may be attained are the proper subjects of the present Inquiry.

But we have already considered the method of proof in the case of Christian Doctrines; and there is no apparent ground of distinction between the mode of proving the truth of a doc-

<sup>b</sup> Art. xx. and xxxiv. and Preface to the Book of Common Prayer.

trine immediately connected with an Ordinance and any other. When Bellarmin, for example, brings together a multitude of passages from the Old Testament and the New to establish the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity, and then, when he would prove the truth of Transubstantiation, alleges one solitary text, speaks indeed of that as his *first* proof, but brings no second, and this solitary passage is after all a text of doubtful and disputed interpretation, do we ever suspect that there is any ground in the nature of the subject for so great a difference? Do we not rather conclude, and with reason, that whatever other warrant there may be for the belief in Transubstantiation, there is at least no Scriptural proof of the doctrine whatsoever<sup>c</sup>?"

When, on the contrary, the Divine Appointment, and the Universal Obligation, of an ordinance or institution are the only points to be established, there are obvious reasons why a less amount of proof from Scripture should be abundantly satisfactory to a reasonable mind. For any thing *external* might be handed down by the Church from age to age with far greater safety and certainty than a simple doctrine. We sometimes hear, indeed, the selfsame word "Tradi-

<sup>c</sup> See Bp. Stillingfleet's "Doctrine of the Trinity and Transubstantiation compared as to Scripture and Reason;" and the places there referred to, Bell. de Christ. l. i. c. 4. &c. and de Euch. l. iii. c. 19.

tion" applied to the continual transmission of Christian doctrines and of the books of the sacred Canon; but we cannot fail to observe the broad distinction between the two cases; the manifest facility which doctrines so transmitted would offer to corruption, against which the books themselves, publicly read and seen, and possessed by various and opposite parties, are comparatively secure. Just so might an external ordinance, cognizable by our very senses, be committed to the safe-keeping of the Church; its constant existence might be easily traced upwards to primitive times; and a comparatively slight recognition of it in the inspired volumes might be all we should require.

Moreover, the Church herself, whilst she has no pretence of authority to originate a Doctrine, has full power to fashion and decree a Rite. And supposing her to discharge this function with any tolerable piety and discretion, the private Christian will obey her directions, and justly expect a blessing upon his obedience. Had no such ordinance as the Supper of the Lord been instituted by our Saviour or His Apostles, the Church might well have appointed such a service to commemorate the sacrifice of the Redeemer; and well might we have joined in it as a sign, and means, although not an assuring sign and blessed pledge, of Divine grace. A slight recognition, consequently, of the Rite in the inspired



Scriptures might have sufficed to establish its obligation upon the most sacred authority, and thus convert a pious obedience to the Church into a faithful compliance with a Divine command. Not of course that the Divine appointment of this blessed Sacrament is but slightly recognised in the Christian Scriptures. The supposition was offered not as an example, but merely as an illustration of the principle contended for; sufficient to shew on general grounds that we have absolutely no need of such an ample array of Scriptural proof to convince us of the Divine original of an ordinance, as we might have desired for our belief in a Revealed Doctrine. Nay, we may not only acquiesce in a less amount of proof, but even observe, as was said, in such a difference one of the numerous instances of a merciful accommodation to our wants, every where to be traced throughout the whole economy of Revelation.

II. To pass, then, from these general remarks, and try the principle in some particular examples; proceeding from the less controverted cases, to those which have become the unhappy occasions of disputes and separation.—

1. The religious observance of *the Lord's Day*,

for instance, is almost universally acknowledged as a Christian duty throughout the Christian world. And a cheering thought it is, amidst our manifold divisions, to observe scarcely a single sect, and not a single Church; interrupting in this great article of belief the general concord; millions of our brethren offering at the same hour their solemn protest against irreligion and idolatry, and suspending their cares and toils to celebrate the Redemption of the world, and adore with one consent the one true God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Is it even necessary that the duty should be explicitly enjoined in the Christian Scriptures, which even without a specific command can be distinctly perceived, and this not only by the considerate Christian, but even by the Statesman, the Moralist, the Philanthropist, to be at once a duty and a blessing? To the poor, that is to the great majority of our race in every land and under every condition of society, this day of religious rest is simply a boon. If a seventh part were added to the amount of labour, although the number of the poor might be increased, their temporal condition would be exactly what it is. But suppose the weekly rest abandoned, a seventh part would not be therefore added to the produce of our labour; for the physician knows that this merciful provision for a remission of human toil is absolutely necessary

to the best exertion of the strength of man, bodily or intellectual<sup>c</sup>. And how much more does every religious man feel it to be essential to the well-being of our higher nature, to the health of the soul, and to our preparation for that future existence, which is our real life!

But then, assuredly, the Statesman and the Philanthropist would never of themselves have devised or enjoined the ordinance. Nor can even its external observance, greatly as it may be promoted, be effectually secured by any efforts of theirs. We must look to higher sources for the origin of the duty and its obligation. We trace back, accordingly, the general religious observance of the Lord's day to the very æra of the promulgation of the Gospel. We find the universality of the practice recognised by the earliest extant writings, genuine or apocryphal, by Ignatius, Justin, the Epistle attributed to Barnabas, the so-called Apostolical Constitutions, as well as by various other works of the second and third and succeeding centuries<sup>d</sup>. And this

<sup>c</sup> See the evidence of Dr. Farr and others before the Committee of the House of Commons on the observance of the Lord's Day, 1832. The remark in the preceding sentence is somewhere made, I think, by Archbishop Whately.

<sup>d</sup> See Ignatius, Ep. to the Magnesians, ix. and notes by Cotelierius, in loc. and by Mr. Jacobson and Mr. Chevallier. Ep. of Barnabas, xx. and the notes and references ap. Cotelier, in loc. (74.) Justin. Apol. 89. (p. 98. Ed. Thirlbii.) Tertullian, Apol. xvi. and in many other places. See Bp. Kaye's

universal observance of the Lord's day is rendered especially striking, not only by varieties in practice in other cases, but even in respect of the Jewish Sabbath; the observance of which we find retained by many in early times together with that of the Lord's day, then discontinued, then revived, and revived amidst so much discrepancy of opinion, that the day was regarded as a Fast in the Western Churches, in the Eastern as a Festival. Why this difference, but because the universal observation of the Lord's day was based upon Apostolical authority, whilst the same Apostles, wheresoever the continued observance of the Jewish Sabbath did not appear to undermine, as in the Galatian Church, the foundations of the Gospel, permitted the practice gradually to disappear before the increasing light of Christianity". Add then but a few recognitions in the Christian Scriptures themselves of the actual observance of the Lord's day even in the age of the Apostles, and with their sanction, nay, apparently, with the implied sanction of our Lord Himself and of the Holy Spirit, and we have all

Eccles. Hist. illustrated from Tertutullian, p. 412. (2d Edit.) Apostol. Constitutions, b. v. c. 19. Routh, Reliq. Sacr. i. p. 114. and note p. 129. iii. p. 237. and note p. 250. Heylin's History of the Sabbath, and Strictures on Heylin's work annexed to Sermons by the Rev. W. James, 1830.

• Gal. iv. 9, 10. cf. Rom. xiv. 5, 6. Col. ii. 16, 17. and see Bishop Horsley's Sermon xxiii. Works, vol. ii.

the proof which we really require of its Divine authority.

But can we not also support its Divine obligation by cogent arguments derived from the Old Scriptures? Undoubtedly, I conceive, we may. Yet these do not appear to be the proofs by which the duty was at first established. They were not its original authority and foundation. For very remarkable has been in this respect the difference of views in later and in primitive times; all indeed agreeing in the same conclusion, but reaching it by very different means. In modern times it is not uncommon to appeal directly to the Fourth Commandment in the Decalogue as a decisive authority for the observance of the Lord's day; and again to assert without hesitation the existence of a Primitive Sabbath commanded and observed from the æra of the Creation, and thence to infer the universal obligation binding on all men in all ages to hallow one day in seven to the service of their Maker. The Fathers, on the contrary, interpreted otherwise the apparent command to this effect in the book of Genesis, and denied the existence of a Patriarchal Sabbath; whilst, instead of appealing to the Fourth Commandment, or considering the Lord's day to be substituted for the Jewish Sabbath, they endeavoured, some of them at least, to prove the foreshewn superiority of the eighth day, i. e. the Lord's day, above the Sabbath of the Jews

by weak and fanciful arguments, drawn from the command to circumcise a child on the eighth day, or the supply of manna vouchsafed for the first time on the eighth day, and not poured down at all upon the seventh.

Between these fanciful analogies on the one hand, and too peremptory decisions on the other, we shall steer a surer and a safer course, if adverting at once to the evidence of Scripture, and also to the genius of the successive dispensations of religion, we admit the probability of a Patriarchal Sabbath, and appeal not indeed to the letter but to the spirit of the Fourth Commandment, so adducing both in confirmation of the Divine appointment of the Christian Sabbath.

That is to say, granted that we cannot prove historically the observance of a Sabbath in the Patriarchal times, yet the fact is probable from the natural unconstrained interpretation of the words in the book of Genesis, “ God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it;” this interpretation being also supported by some scattered intimations of the division of time into weeks, of the connexion of the number seven with the doctrine of the Creation, and of a Sabbath among the children of Israel anterior to the giving of the Law <sup>f</sup>. This probability, accordingly, affords

<sup>f</sup> Gen. ii. 1—3. viii. 10. 12. Exod. xvi. 22—30. Numb. xxiii. 1. 14. 29. See Bp. Horsley’s Dissertation on the Prophecies of the Messiah dispersed among the Heathen, Works, vol. iii.

some confirmation of the Divine appointment of a Sabbath under the Gospel. Yet so far is this from being the foundation of our belief in such appointment, that the institution of an Evangelical Sabbath, together with that of the Law, itself supplies one of the strongest supports to the scanty evidence of a Patriarchal Sabbath. The later institutions reflect a clearer light upon the earlier history, connect the successive dispensations in one harmonious scheme, and contribute to assure us, that there never was a period when one day in seven was not hallowed to the glory of the Creator, and blessed to the benefit of His creatures, from the very time when creation itself was accomplished, and “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”

Just so, again, with respect to the Mosaic Sabbath, the Fourth Commandment is not, I apprehend, the true foundation of our Christian duty. Nay, I dare not appeal directly to that, as a commandment obligatory upon Christian men, which no Christian Church has ever yet enjoined or observed. Neither may any Christian Church presume to teach as a Divine commandment one portion of a positive precept, whilst of her own authority she abrogates another. That is the privilege of Inspiration alone. We say indeed, and we say justly, that not hallowing the seventh day, yet hallowing one

day in seven, we fulfil the spirit of the Law. But a Positive Institution, if obligatory at all, is to be obeyed also in the letter; and what now appears so slight a change, (to say nothing here of the total abandonment in the Christian Church of the awful strictness in the commanded observance of the Mosaic rest,) the mere alteration of the day would scarcely, in the first instance, have appeared a trivial change. Insomuch that a great divine has considered, that as to hallow one day in seven is the public protest of the true worshipper against false religion, so to sanctify the first day of the week instead of the seventh is the protest of the Christian against the Law<sup>g</sup>. It is to the spirit of the Commandment that we appeal, not to its letter. The letter we believe to have been abrogated, but the spirit survives. The spirit of that command was not to be abrogated, which was distinguished in so marked a manner from the other positive institutions of the Law; pronounced by the awful voice of God, placed alone among moral precepts, the authoritative declarations of our natural duties, itself unconnected with shadowy and typical rites, which were partial enactments temporary in their very nature, whilst this rested upon the ground of universal religion, applicable alike to all the sons of men.

<sup>g</sup> See Horsley's Sermon xxiii. Works, vol. ii. p. 11, 12, 13.



The spirit of this great command survives, accordingly, in another ordinance equally of Divine appointment, but more spiritual and more comprehensive; pointing to the doctrines of Redemption, yet still embracing every thing which pervaded the Mosaic precept, of glory to the Creator and benefit to His creatures, even to the lowest of His creatures, those whom we too frequently oppress, but who are never forgotten by Him. In this sense, and in this sense alone, the Church of England, I believe, prays that we may observe the Fourth Commandment, the spirit, namely, of the Mosaic Law, as it still lives in the Christian ordinance of the Lord's day.

And in this sense we adduce the Mosaic Institution, together with the Patriarchal, as a strong confirmation of the Divine appointment of the Christian Sabbath, and a yet stronger proof, perhaps, of its importance. Nevertheless, the prime and independent proof of its Divine original remains, as before, in the universal consent of the Christian Church, but, not resting there, traced up to Apostolic practice, and implied Apostolic authority—the resurrection of our Lord commemorated on this day from the very first; that commemoration, apparently, blessed and sanctioned by the re-appearance of our Lord at first only on this day; the day distinguished next by the miraculous outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; and then set apart

for the contributions of charity, and the solemnities of public worship, and at length, even before the sacred Canon was closed, distinguished by its expressive and appropriate title, “the Lord’s day.”—And upon this concurrent testimony of the New Scriptures and the Old, slight indeed in its separate parts, yet strong in its combination, we may well esteem this sacred ordinance far above every other, which can make no such appeal to Holy Scripture; valuing others, indeed, in proportion to their uses, and importance, and universality, and antiquity, as ordinances of the Church, but reverencing this, and this alone, among Christian Festivals, as of Divine authority.

2. And would to heaven that some who can recognise in this instance the force even of few and scattered notices in Scripture, when combined with indisputable evidence of a universal practice, would apply the same method of proof in parallel cases! So might the Unity of the Church be less disturbed, and none of our brethren be deprived of divinely appointed means of grace!

*The Baptism of Infants*, for example, upon what principles is it to be maintained?—For, is the practice any where enjoined in Holy Scripture? Do not the Scriptures, on the contrary,

prescribe conditions for the due reception of Holy Baptism, sometimes faith, sometimes repentance, sometimes both; how then do we presume to administer the rite to those who are incapable of either <sup>h</sup>? And do we not, in fact, perceive every day that the unauthorized observance produces no fruit, or fruits of bitterness, a fatal confidence, a reckless life?

Now all these plausible objections—some of them indeed are altogether unwarrantable, for who are we, that we should pretend to determine by any man's conduct after Baptism, what it would have been had he remained unbaptized, or judge by any external signs at one time of what passed within the soul of another being at another time?—but these objections, so far as they are plausible at all, derive their only force from a misconception of the real question. That question is not whether we shall introduce a new practice, but whether we shall reject the ancient and established practice of the Universal Church. Doubtless we should need the most overpowering arguments for the introduction of some new administration of the Sacrament, or even new institution in the Church, professing to be founded upon some new discoveries of the sense

<sup>h</sup> Acts ii. 38. viii. 36, 37. xx. 21. cf. Matt. ix. 13. Mark ii. 17. Luke xxiv. 47. Acts iii. 19. v. 31. xvi. 31. xvii. 30. xxvi. 20. Rom. ii. 4. iii. 25. v. 1, 2, &c. vi. 3, 4, &c. Gal. ii. 16. Eph. ii. 8. iii. 12. 2 Thess. ii. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 25. Heb. x. 39. 1 Pet. iii. 21. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

of Scripture, (such as Calvin's appointment of lay-presbyters, for example, based upon a novel exposition of a solitary text<sup>i</sup>;) but here the question is, whether the received practice is not warranted by the nature of the case and the authority of Holy Writ, and, therefore, whether we may presume to lay it aside.

This plain and practical distinction, accordingly, the Church of England bears in mind when she declares, that "The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ<sup>k</sup>."—To be "*retained*," be it observed, not introduced, not adopted, not even revived, but retained. For what was the fact? At that time, as at present, the baptism of Infants was the universal practice of all the Churches of Christ; and a practice neither rejected nor questioned by any considerable number of individual Christians. It was not, moreover, like Infant Communion, the offspring of indiscreet piety or superstitious fears, begun, perhaps, some two hundred years after the death of Christ, not supposed to be necessary until the ninth century, and, afterwards, because it could pretend to no Apostolical authority, discontinued and condemned<sup>l</sup>. Superstition in this instance had

<sup>i</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 17. See note at the end.

<sup>k</sup> Art. xxvii.

<sup>l</sup> See Waterland's History of Infant Communion, and note by Mr. W. D. Conybeare, B. I. viii. p. 491—493.

even taken a contrary direction ; baptism having been sometimes deferred to the latest possible period, in order that the person baptized might depart this life with the plenary remission of his sins conveyed in baptism unsullied and unimpaired. The baptism of Infants, on the contrary, could be distinctly traced to the Apostolic age. About one hundred and ten years after the death of our Saviour, Justin speaks of persons then alive of sixty and seventy years of age who had been made disciples to Christ from their infancy ; (*ἐμαθητεύθησαν*, the word employed in the institution of baptism.) They had therefore been made disciples to Christ in their infancy within the Apostolic age<sup>m</sup>. Is it doubted whether they had also been baptized ? Irenæus, about thirty years later, whose practice it is to speak of Baptism as our “ Regeneration,” expressly states, that infants were among those who were regenerated unto God<sup>n</sup>. And the practice of the Apostolic Church could not be unknown to Irenæus, a Christian Bishop, at this time nearly eighty years of age, himself the disciple of Polycarp, as Polycarp had been of the Apostle St. John.

Passing by then, that is to say in this mere

<sup>m</sup> Apol. I. See W. Wall’s Hist. of Infant Baptism, part i. ch. ii.

<sup>n</sup> Adv. Hæreses, ii. 39. ed. Grabe. See Wall, *ibid.* part i. ch. iii.

outline of the argument passing by, the multitude of early writers by whom these well-known testimonies are succeeded and supported<sup>p</sup>, we turn to the Scriptures, and inquire, Do the Scriptures justify the Church? Do they sanction the universal practice? nay, do they prohibit it, or justify us in laying it aside? For that is the point at issue.—True it is, that in the comprehensive language of Scripture, “Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them,” or such and such a person “was baptized, he and all his straightway,” the baptism of Infants is neither commanded nor recorded. Yet is it not excluded. And the history relating to the conversion of grown men might be silent respecting Infant-baptism, and leave us no inference to be deduced from that silence. But then Baptism was, undeniably, the gate of admission into the Christian Church; and the admission of believers was immediate; Jew, and Samaritan, and Proselyte, and Gentile, were no sooner converted than they were baptized, “straightway,” “the same day,” the same night<sup>q</sup>; and they who administered the rite were Jews, accustomed to an earlier covenant into which the infant children of Jewish parents had

<sup>p</sup> See W. Wall on Infant Baptism, part i. and part ii. ch. x. and Bp. Kaye’s *Eccles. Hist.* illustrated from Tertullian, p. 329. 449. (2d Ed.)

<sup>q</sup> Compare John iii. 3. 5. Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Tit. iii. 5. with Acts ii. 38—41. viii. 12, 13. 36—38. x. 47, 48. xvi. 31—33.

ever been admitted; how could they suppose that the children of Christian parents were excluded from the New Covenant, when they had no command to shut them out? and if admissible, how receive them except by the appointed door? Nay, and if they could have forgotten Circumcision, and its obvious bearing upon the corresponding rite of admission into the New Covenant, they could not but remember the displeasure of their Master, when they had lately been disposed to debar the young children from His presence, and those touching words, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God<sup>r</sup>.”

We “doubt not,” therefore, “but earnestly believe,” that the same blessed Saviour will “favourably receive, and will embrace with the arms of His mercy,” the infant children of Christian parents brought unto Him at this day by Holy Baptism; for we conclude that an absolute prohibition would have been required to prevent the Apostles themselves from commencing that “charitable work;” in one word, that the practice of the Church began upon Apostolic authority,—provided only that there was nothing in the very institution of Christ to forbid the practice.—True, the child is incapable alike of Repentance

<sup>r</sup> Mark x. 13—16. Matt. xix. Luke xvii. Compare Matt. xviii. 1—14.

and of Faith; but of Repentance he has no need; and the faith of his parents may be accepted for his own by Him who forgave the sins of the paralytic for the faith of his friends\*. Nay, and if the goodness of God were indeed restrained within the letter of his promises, the adult convert would be equally incapable of Faith and Repentance in order to Baptism, since they are not to be attained without some portion of that spiritual aid to which he has only through Baptism a covenant-title. If there be any other semblance of deficiency attaching to Infant-baptism, that the primitive rite of Confirmation seems expressly calculated to supply'. The inestimable blessings, meanwhile, of Baptism itself, the remission of the sentence consequent upon our natural corruption, the reconciliation, the new birth, the adoption, the title to spiritual grace, the inheritance of heaven, of all these the Infant is as evidently capable as he is absolutely in need. Who shall say how early moral agency

\* Matt. ix. 2. Mark ii. 5. Luke v. 20.

' See Abp. Whately's Address to his Clergy, 1834. p. 14. "The Ordinance of Confirmation is the connecting link between the one Sacrament and the other; the conclusion and completion of the Baptismal Service, and the introduction to the Holy Communion. And though too often so mistaken and perverted as to become an empty and unmeaning form, or a dangerous snare, it has, when rightly used, this benefit among others, that it does away the objections to Infant-baptism, and combines the advantages both of that and of the opposite systems."



begins, and how early therefore spiritual assistance is required? or where is the Christian parent, who doubts that his child, if he died to-morrow, would be capable through Christ of being admitted into heaven, how then shall he doubt that he is capable of admittance to-day into the Church of Christ upon earth? or how presume, upon the ground of some plausible theory, to withhold his child from the presence of that Saviour, who would “presently embrace him with the arms of His mercy?”

Nay, the Baptist himself appears to bear a reluctant testimony to the strength of that conclusion, to which he is unprepared to yield a full assent. For he too would bring his children to Christ, but by a rite unauthorized in the Christian Church; dedicating them to God, as he terms it, by aspersion with water, yet not in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; thus in some sort admitting the principle, though he does not as yet reform his practice, but rather presumes to substitute a device of human invention for a Sacrament of Divine institution<sup>u</sup>.

### 3. And is not something of the same kind

<sup>u</sup> The practical effect of this device is to make the members of a Baptist congregation consider themselves, though their Minister does not, as already baptized; and the general result of the system must needs be, I fear, in too many cases, that they are deprived of the benefit of *both* the Sacraments.

observable in some of those Protestant Churches which have unhappily rejected, what we at least believe to be the Divine Institution of Episcopacy? Has there been nothing here also of human appointment substituted for the Divine?—But into this subject, the third and last example on which I proposed to touch, the limits of this Discourse preclude our entering at any length. And after what has been already said, it will be unnecessary to do more than briefly to advert to the discussion, in order to elicit from it two or three practical consequences affecting ourselves as well as others.

For the general conduct of the argument is as before. In the instance of Episcopacy, indeed, the Scriptural evidence appears far more distinct and clear than in the preceding example. But the method of investigation is the same. We should still begin with a universal practice of the Church, and trace it upwards to its origin in the Scriptures of truth. Let this method be reversed, let men examine the Scriptures first, perplex themselves with the meaning of terms, denoting ministerial offices and functions before the terms had acquired their technical senses, and then proceed by these to interpret the records of the Primitive Church, what do they but involve the subject in gratuitous difficulties? And yet, observes an excellent writer, “this method of expounding an ancient record has been made the

principal ground on which arguments against the Apostolical institution of Episcopacy have been supported\*.”

But nothing can be clearer than the distinct existence of three Ministerial Orders in all Episcopal Churches at the present day. Other terms there may be, Patriarch, Archbishop, Archdeacon, Curate, Acolyte, with whatever else has been adopted to denote a peculiar charge, or precedence, or subordinate ministry; but no inquirer fails to recognise the existence and the essential functions of the three distinct Orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon. Nor, again, is it either doubted, or disputed, that three hundred years ago every Church in Christendom acknowledged the same threefold institution of the Christian Ministry; that the first Reformers, where-soever they departed from the general usage, openly expressed their reluctance, and pleaded necessity as their sole excuse; nay, that Calvin himself pronounced those to be worthy of every anathema, who should not reverently observe and obey such an Episcopacy as should be subordinate to Christ, and dependent upon Him<sup>†</sup>; and, in fine,

\* Bp. Russell's Sermon upon "the Historical Evidence for the Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy." p. 14.

† *Talem si nobis hierarchiam exhibeant, in quâ sic eminent Episcopi ut Christo subesse non recusent, ut ab illo tanquam unico capite pendeant, et ad ipsum referantur, &c. tum verò nullo non anathemate dignos fateor si qui erunt qui non eam reverenter summâque obedientiâ observant.* Calvin. de

that tracing the historical evidence of Episcopacy from the Reformation up to primitive times, we find it universally established in all the Churches in the second century. But it cannot be pretended that Episcopacy had its commencement in that century. If we cannot prove, as I think we cannot, that at the close of the first century every considerable Church had its Bishop as well as its Presbyters and Deacons,—for the Church of Corinth, from whatever cause, appears from the Epistle of Clement to have been at that time an exception,—there is at least abundant evidence that it was the ordinary practice; and that evidence, moreover, extends to the very age of the Apostles themselves. The earliest Ecclesiastical historians enumerate the first Bishops of the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Smyrna, Alexandria, Rome, and trace them in each case from the Apostles<sup>2</sup>. Polycarp is

necessit. Eccles. Reformandæ. To the same effect Beza, speaking of the English Church and her Hierarchy, *Fruatur sanè istâ singulari Dei beneficentiâ, quæ utinam illi sit perpetua.* Resp. ad Sarrav. p. 111. See these, and several other testimonies to the same purpose of Melancthon, Luther, Bucer, and other French and German divines, cited by Bp. Hall, *Episcopacy by Divine Right*, part i. §. ii. §. iii. §. iv. See also many of them briefly summed up in Note K to Bp. Russell's Sermon, above cited. See also Confession of Augsburg, p. 150, *Sylloge Confessionum.* (1804.)

<sup>2</sup> Hegesippus and Eusebius. See Euseb. l. ii. c. 24. iii. 2. 14, &c. iv. 1. 22. Bingham's *Antiquities*, book ii. c. i. §. 3.

expressly said to have been appointed Bishop of the Church in Smyrna by the Apostles; Ignatius Bishop of Antioch within the lifetime of some of the Apostles<sup>a</sup>. The well-known testimony, therefore, of both these Fathers, although written in the second century, belongs to the first, and reaches back to the very age of the Apostles. And language cannot be more full, and express, and particular, than is the testimony of Ignatius, in his Epistles to the Churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, Smyrna, and to Polycarp himself, not merely to the bare existence of Episcopacy, but to its importance, and sacredness, its value even in conjunction with the holy Eucharist as a prime bond of Christian unity.

Such is the broad historical testimony to the universality and antiquity of the institution; its universal adoption so early as the second century; its general adoption earlier still; its antiquity and its origin traceable up to Apostolic times, and to the Apostles themselves. Now it is not a little difficult to account for facts like these, except upon the hypothesis of the Divine original of Episcopacy. If they stood alone they would supply, not, I readily admit, a conclusive proof,

§. 4. Waddington's History of the Church, part i. ch. ii. p. 21.

<sup>a</sup> A. D. 69. Euseb. l. iii. c. 22. 36. iv. 14. (after Irenæus.) See Bp. Russell's Sermon, p. 25. 29. and note F.

yet such a strong presumption in its favour, as cannot be lightly set aside by any devout inquirer after the will of God. But they are far from standing alone. It is Scriptural testimony which crowns the argument from history; whilst the light of present facts and the history of the past, clear away every shadow of obscurity from the pages of Scripture. Knowing what we thus know, we cannot be perplexed by the fluctuations of language or of offices; extraordinary offices discontinued with the cessation of extraordinary gifts; terms not as yet used with technical precision when they had but as yet become technical; Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Teachers<sup>b</sup>; Apostles termed Presbyters, and Presbyters Bishops<sup>c</sup>—in all these things we see only the natural change of words and things corresponding with the changes of events and circumstances, and through them all we discern with perfect clearness in the New Testament itself, and in the very infancy of the Church, the two distinct ecclesiastical offices of Presbyter and Deacon; and, again, the Apostles evidently exercising a jurisdiction over both; and lastly, as the Churches multiplied, the only Apostle of whose labours and cares we have any full account in

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 28.—30. Eph. iv. 11.

<sup>c</sup> Compare 1 Pet. v. 1. 2 John 1. 3 John 1. 1 Pet. ii. 25. Phil. i. 1. Acts xx. 17, 28. 1 Tim. iii. 1—7, 8—13. 2 Tim. iv. 5. 11. Tit. i. 5—7. 1 Cor. iii. 5.

the sacred pages delegating to other men as in the text a portion of the same office and jurisdiction, such portion as uninspired men could exercise, and such exactly as we behold committed to Bishops at the present day; authority to reprove, rebuke, exhort, to maintain sound doctrine, reject the heretic, to lay on hands, to continue a succession of faithful teachers, judge of the qualifications of Presbyters and Deacons, appoint Elders in every city<sup>d</sup>. Finally, we observe these acknowledged functions of the Episcopate, which the Apostles had indisputably exercised themselves, committed to Timothy and Titus at the close of the ministry of the Apostles, at the very time, namely, the most natural and reasonable for the continuation of the office, if it was indeed to be perpetuated. We see it continued, probably, during the lifetime of the last of the Apostles in the “Angels,”

<sup>d</sup> Compare Acts xiv. 23. 2 Cor. xi. 28. Acts xx. 17, 18, &c. Rom. i. 11. 14. Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. i. 3. ii. 1. 8, 9. 12. iii. 1—15. iv. 6. 11, 12. 14. v. 1. 7. 17. 19, 20. 22. 2 Tim. ii. 2. iv. 1, 2. 5, 6. Tit. i. 5—14. ii. 15. iii. 10. I do not employ the text, it may be right to observe, as if the word “ordain” *καταστήσης* were used in its modern technical sense. Its meaning is nearer, perhaps, to the ecclesiastical sense of the modern word “institute.” But the various passages above referred to shew the fact, that Timothy and Titus were appointed to select, and examine, and ordain Elders, and we are concerned not with words but facts.

as they are called, of the Apocalyptic Churches ; we see no trace of this method of Church Government having been superseded ; and whilst this was sanctioned, we find no other enjoined. Combining, therefore, present facts, and continuous history, with Apostolic usage, and remembering by whom the Apostles had been themselves ordained, we derive from the whole evidence, Historical and Scriptural, a sufficient and satisfactory proof of the Divine origin of the Institution.

I dwell upon the word a “ *sufficient and satisfactory*” proof of the Divine origin of Episcopacy for a practical reason, to which I would briefly advert before we conclude.

For as to the method and the principle of investigation which have now been advocated, these, I trust, will have been rendered abundantly clear by the foregoing examples. The method of investigation, which I have recommended, may not indeed have been always sufficiently observed. The advocates for Episcopacy, for instance, often appear to reject the more simple and obvious proceeding ; not bringing forward in the first instance the clear and confessed to illustrate the doubtful and obscure, but dwelling upon the sacred pages first of all, instead of making well-known facts and admitted



history the natural commentary upon Holy Scripture<sup>e</sup>. But for the principle of all these arguments, that, I need scarcely say, has been recommended again and again. So, for example, Bishop Stillingfleet; “As to the divine institution of the Lord’s day,” he writes, “we do not go about to lessen it, but only to shew that some examples in Scripture being joined with the universal practice of the Church in its purest ages, hath been allowed to be a sufficient ground, not only for following ages to observe it, but to look on it as at least an Apostolical institution.” And Augustine long before, *Sunt multa quæ universa tenet ecclesia, et ob hoc ab apostolis præcepta bene creduntur, quanquam scripta non reperiuntur*<sup>f</sup>.

Nevertheless, how reasonable soever the principle may be in itself, we have need of caution in applying it; and this not merely, as in the case of every argument, lest we conclude too much from insufficient premises, but lest we apply the prin-

<sup>e</sup> E. g. Bishop Taylor, on Episcopacy, Works, vol. vii. Bishop Hall, Episcopacy by Divine Right. Bishop Russell, Sermon cited above.

<sup>f</sup> Stillingfleet’s Ordination Sermon, cited by Bishop Russell, p. 44. who also cites the extract from Augustine *De Bap. cont. Donatistas*, lib. v. c. 7. and the following, *Multa quæ non inveniuntur in Literis eorum, neque in Conciliis posteriorum, et tamen quia per universam custodiuntur ecclesiam, non nisi ab ipsis tradita et commendata creduntur*. Ibid. l. ii. c. 7. and other passages to the same purpose. Note G. p. 58.

ciple where it is not justly applicable. For the tradition of *facts* must not be confounded with tradition of *doctrine*. It may very well be that outward Ordinances, the constitution of the Church itself, the baptism of infants, the Lord's day, may have been committed to the safe-keeping of the Church, and with some scriptural sanction, although without any specific command, super-added to universal practice, they may carry the conviction to our minds of their Apostolic origin. Yet will it by no means follow that Doctrines also are likely to have been thus committed to Tradition with a similar imperfection in the Scriptural proof of their Divine authority. The Ordinance might have been binding, although not so binding, had Scripture never noticed it; but the alleged Christian Doctrine, if it cannot be proved to be revealed, is, as a Doctrine, nothing.

Lastly, whilst on the one hand the recognition of an ordinance in Holy Scripture, even without express record of a command for its observance, sets it upon an eminence far above those on which Holy Scripture has been silent—and thus the Ember days, for example, and the Friday fast, are not to be compared with the Lord's day—yet again, on the other hand, the absence of a specific command is not to pass unheeded, whensoever the authority of an ordinance is the subject of controversy between ourselves and our

brethren in Christ. In such a case, and with reference to them, the obligation of Episcopacy, for example, is not to be compared with that of the Sacraments. The argument may be abundantly sufficient and satisfactory to *us*, which we may not expect to carry conviction of necessity to other minds. This is the plain practical distinction which the Church of England appears to have observed with respect to this very instance of Episcopacy. In her Articles and her Ordination Services she is definite and decided, as to the constitution of the Church, which she had received, and which she preserved inviolate. Her conviction was complete, and she acted upon it. It was her bounden duty so to do. And doubtless she judged an Episcopal succession to be among the "things that were wanting" in some sister Churches, and deeply lamented the interruption even of external union in the body of Christ. Nevertheless she cautiously abstains from the condemnation of others; and does not so define a visible Church, or a lawful Ministry, as to exclude the Churches which had not retained Episcopacy. And may her faithful children imitate her moderation and her charity! Let us not suspect her conduct of indifference to sacred Truth, or imagine that Christian Unity will be better promoted by a more earnest zeal. Truth is but one, and the Church of Christ should be one; and in our love of truth, and the fervency

of our daily prayers for Christian unity, there can be no excess. But the known principles of human nature may well assure us, that few things are better calculated than arguments overstrained, or the very appearance of authority unduly assumed, to perpetuate Disunion, and retard the much-desired progress of Christian Truth.

O Almighty God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner-stone; Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## S E R M O N VI.



2 Cor. i. 24.

NOT FOR THAT WE HAVE DOMINION OVER YOUR FAITH,  
BUT ARE HELPERS OF YOUR JOY.

It is with our spiritual, as with our natural birth, with our second birth, as with the first ; we are not born, nor are we born again, insulated independent beings. Nor are we dependent upon our Maker alone, His protection or His grace, but mutually dependent upon one another ; nay, even the governor is in many ways dependent upon the governed, and the teacher upon the disciple. And our dependence upon others does not cease when we can walk alone, or think alone ; it continues throughout the whole period of our probation ; we are born, and we continue, members of civil society as well as the domestic ; and we are born again by baptism into the Church of Christ, and when we shall have attained, if we do attain, “ unto a perfect man, unto the measure

of the stature of the fulness of Christ," we are yet to live on in her communion, and die in her communion.

So it was at the first preaching of the Gospel. We hear of disciples "added to the Church," and "continuing in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers;" but was it ever recorded of any Christian in Apostolic times as of an eminent person in this country, that "in the latter part of his life he was not a professed member of any particular sect of Christians, he frequented no public worship, nor used any religious rite in his family?" Yet even at first there might be no inconsiderable danger lest the fellowship of Christians, and the unity of the Church, should be unheeded or undervalued. The Greek might imagine that he was to become not a member of a community, but a partizan of certain philosophical opinions; and even the Jew, accustomed to bonds of union more narrow and more external,

\* Newton's Life of Milton. The account, however, "must be received, as Dr. Symmons observes, with some caution. Milton's blindness and other infirmities might be in part his excuse; and it is certain that his daily employments were always ushered in by devout meditation and study of the Scriptures." Note on Newton's Life of Milton, p. xcix. Ed. 1824. But will not the description in the text apply to many who have no similar excuses to plead? Cf. Acts ii. 41, 42. 47. iv. 32. v. 14. xi. 24. ix. 31. xiii. 1. xiv. 23. xv. 22. 36. 41. xvi. 5.

one race, one nation, one temple, might be slow to apprehend a spiritual society embracing all the world, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, by which all alike, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, are “by one Spirit baptized into one body<sup>b</sup>.” And there was corresponding care to counteract the danger. A visible form and polity were given to the new society; the Sacraments appointed to be the means and bonds of spiritual communion; all the brethren bound by a new commandment suited to their new spiritual brotherhood; their union and communion illustrated and enforced by the most expressive figures, the “vine and the branches,” the “one body in Christ, and every one members one of another;” the one spiritual and “holy temple in the Lord, in whom all are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”—Nay, the building up a holy Church is sometimes described as the very purpose of God in Christ, and all those things which are literally true only of individual Christians, the constituent parts of this one Society, are in a figure transferred to the Society itself, and Christ is said to have “loved the Church, and given Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. Gal. iii. 27, 28. Eph. ii. 14—22. iv. 1—6. Col. iii. 11.

present it to Himself a glorious Church, holy and without blemish<sup>c</sup>.”

It may deserve our notice, moreover, that no where are the Apostles so full and express in setting forth the mutual and intimate communion of all Christians one with another, of all the members of that “one body in Christ,” as where the subject is the variety of offices appointed by our Lord in His Church, or the variety of gifts bestowed by that “one and the self-same Spirit, who divideth to every man severally as He will;” the “word of wisdom,” the “word of knowledge,” “prophecy,” “interpretation of tongues;” or the various offices of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher;—those gifts, namely, and those offices, which have the most immediate connexion with our present subject, having been given and constituted in order to the attainment of Christian truth, the perfection of Christian knowledge, the unity of the faith<sup>d</sup>.—Was there no prophetic wisdom in this? no melancholy anticipation of the mutual errors of Christians on both sides, of the governors and the governed, the teachers and the taught, the proud assumption of an usurped dominion, the equally proud resistance to just authority?—

<sup>c</sup> John xv. 1—4. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. 2 Cor. vi. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Eph. ii. 19—22. Rom. xii. 4, 5. 1 Cor. xii. 12—27. Eph. i. 7—14. ii. 14—22. iv. 1—16. v. 26, 27.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. xii. Eph. iv.



But of this hereafter. For the present it will be recollected, that the preceding Discourses have been largely occupied in displaying the conformity, the harmony, between the structure of the Christian Scriptures, (nay, even of the Old Scriptures as well as the New,) and the constitution of the Christian Church; and in setting forth, accordingly, some of the uses of the Church in connexion with the Scriptures, whether in supplying an Introduction to the Christian Doctrines always intended and generally necessary, or a Presumptive Evidence of their truth, or a still stronger Presumption in favour of the Divine origin of certain Christian Ordinances.

Other means and privileges we indeed possess in order to the attainment of Christian Truth, which yet remain to be considered. But something must still be said in this behalf, although very briefly, of the uses of the Church ancient, or existing, of Creeds, and Articles, and Fathers, in one word of CHURCH AUTHORITY, or, to speak more correctly with reference to our present purpose, of CHURCH PRIVILEGES.

But what? it will be said, Shall we then number Church authority among the Privileges of the Christian? Shall we strive to introduce again the most intolerable of all tyrannies? "Substitute the priest for the human understanding?" "bow to the authority of human mas-

ters, acknowledge human creeds, claim jurisdiction over others' consciences, or suffer others to dictate to us?" Suffer fallible men to "prescribe to us the Articles of our Christian faith, and interpose between us and our heavenly Guide and Saviour?"—Now I believe without doubt that sentiments of this description, which are frequently insinuated and sometimes openly expressed, instead of being rational and enlarged, are the very offspring of prejudice and contracted views. Yet is it not to be dissembled, that the melancholy history of the Church of Christ has given them somewhat of a specious and plausible air. There have been grievous faults on both sides; a disposition to claim too much, as well as a disposition to concede too little. Hence, as was said, the prophetic earnestness with which the Apostle labours to impress upon all the members of the body of Christ, the teachers and the disciples alike, the great ends for which various gifts were bestowed, and various offices appointed in the Church, and the great duty of mutual love in the pursuit of Christian truth and of our mutual edification. Hence also whilst the younger are exhorted to "submit themselves to the elder, yea all of us to be subject one to another, and to be clothed with humility," Christian Pastors are directly enjoined to feed

\* Dr. Channing's Letter on Creeds, &c. 1837. p. 6, 7, 8. and Discourses, 1833. Disc I. p. 3. III. p. 147.

the flock of God, “not as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock<sup>f</sup>.” Nay even St. Paul himself, and speaking of himself, addresses the Corinthians in the meek language of the text, “not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy”—upon which words Erasmus, an eye-witness, yet not always among the sternest reprovers, of a corrupt Christianity, remarks, *Hæc animadvertenda nobis, qui fidei ac religionis titulo ad tyrannidem abutimur. Nec alio fortassis studio quidam cupimus Orbem redigi ad professionem Christi, quam ut ipsi latius regnemus*<sup>g</sup>.—Bearing all these things in mind, therefore, I am constrained on the present occasion to depart from the method hitherto observed, and not to inquire directly into the advantages which we enjoy connected with Church Authority, until I shall have first in plain terms *disclaimed such pretensions to Authority* as I believe to be *erroneous*, and *modified* those which I suppose to be *exaggerated*.

I. It is of course to be recollected, that the “Authority” of the Church is not always spoken of in the same sense; and the mere statement of three different senses in which the term is com-

<sup>f</sup> 1 Pet. v. 1—6. Rom. xii. 10. Eph. v. 21. Phil. ii. 3.

<sup>g</sup> Critici Sacri, in loc.

monly employed will conduce not a little to just conclusions upon the whole matter. These senses are, first, the authority of *Order*; secondly, of *Influence*; thirdly, an *Absolute* authority, founded upon Infallibility.

Thus it appears essential to the very existence of a Church, as a Society, that is to say, of any particular branch of the Universal Church of Christ, that she should exercise what has been called an authority of *Order*, not merely with respect to discipline and ceremonies, but also with respect to matters of faith. For she must determine, how difficult and responsible soever may be the office, and most responsible it is, she must determine who shall, and who shall not, be members of the Society, in other words, she must settle *the terms of Church Communion*. And, further, in these later days, considering the unhappy controversies which have distracted the Christian community, she can scarcely avoid pronouncing her judgment upon some of the more important subjects of debate, and requiring a concurrence in that judgment on the part of her *Pastors and Teachers*. All this a Christian Society may do, and must do, according to the best exercise of her judgment and discretion, although she lays claim to no immunity from error. And thus the Church of England, whilst she openly disclaims all pretensions to infallibility, yet, acting as a Society, requires the assent, first,

of all her members to the Apostles' Creed and the Church Catechism, and, besides, of the Ministers of the Word to her larger "Articles of Religion."

And in this sense of the term, accordingly, she has declared in the twentieth of those Articles, that she has "authority in controversies of faith:"—yet not, I apprehend, in this sense alone, but probably with reference also to the second sense of the word already mentioned, the authority, namely, of *Weight* or *Influence*, or by whatever other expression we may best denote that authority which, without pretending to immunity from error, claims only *respect and deference*.

And who is there who does not admit some notion of Church authority, in this sense of the term, except the visionary assertor of an unnatural independence? For indeed, the deference which it implies is the same in kind, and with the degree of it we are not at present concerned, but in kind it is the same, with the respect due from the child to his parent, the young to the old, the rude to the skilful, the unlearned to the learned, the individual to the society of what kind soever to which he may belong: a deference which, although it may, doubtless, sometimes foster prejudice, and promote error, and therefore requires to be duly regulated and restrained, is

nevertheless the dictate alike of nature and of reason, and may be an auxiliary and a guide to truth.

It is in this second sense of the term, accordingly, that I shall have more to say hereafter of Church authority; whilst to the mere authority of Order I shall have no occasion to refer, because it is not of itself a guide to truth, but becomes a guide only as it passes on into the authority of Weight and Influence, and makes a just demand upon our deference and respect. Church-authority, meantime, in the third sense of the expression, when it claims to be *Absolute*, not admitting of question, founded upon Infallibility asserted or implied, this it is which we must disallow, by what Church soever it may have been maintained, or for what Church soever it may now be claimed.

1. And, first, the clearest assertion of this claim is that put forth by the Roman branch of the Church of Christ, not indeed *as* a branch of the Universal Church, but as the Catholic Church itself. Nothing can be more simple and complete than the authority which she claims in matters of faith. It places obedience to the Church, to the *existing Church*, in lieu of all inquiry into truth, nay, it repudiates inquiry as in itself a crime. So the claim is stated by her

popular writers ; as, for example, in the instance of Transubstantiation, “ The unerring authority of the Church has declared it to be true, and enjoined the belief of it ;” and after such a decision, “ it is the part of an infidel rather than a Christian to ask, how can this be <sup>h</sup> ?” If indeed it were only meant by this, that the Christian must acquiesce in a doctrine which he allowed to be revealed, not inquiring into the mode when he admitted the fact, this would be only the reasonable modesty of the creature submitting to the Creator, the finite to the Infinite : but what is really required is the unreserved submission of the Christian to the Church, the finite to the finite, the fallible to the fallible. So it is laid down by another popular writer. The one gate of entrance into the Catholic Church is “ absolute, unconditional submission to the teaching of the Church.” This is styled “ the fundamental principle of Catholicity.” “ No one is, or can be, a Catholic, but by his entire submission to the authority of his Church.” And the ground of this submission is no less simple and comprehensive ; for, “ God has appointed His Church the infallible and unfailing depository of all

<sup>h</sup> “ The Catholic Christian instructed, &c.” cited by Dr. Middleton, in the Preface to his Letter from Rome, p. lxxvii. (fourth edit.) See Dr. Hey’s Lectures, book iv. art. xx. sect. i.

truth<sup>i</sup>.” In the same peremptory terms the Rhemish annotators, speaking of General Councils, “Holy Counsels—have ever the assistance of God’s Spirit, and therefore cannot erre<sup>k</sup>.” And in the recent Theological Lectures at Maynooth, “*Concilia, convocatione et celebratione generalia, sunt infallibilia*<sup>l</sup>.” And Bellarmin, “All Catholics are agreed, that the Pope and a General Council together are absolutely infallible, when they make Decrees on Faith and Morals, *Pontificem cum Generali Concilio non posse errare in condendis fidei decretis vel generalibus præceptis morum*<sup>m</sup>.”

However guarded, therefore, the Church of Rome may be in some of her Authoritative Decrees and Symbols, it is impossible to doubt the sentiments of her members respecting the Infallibility, and consequent authority, of the Church, her “supreme,” nay, as a living writer has even dared to term it, her “divine authority” in

<sup>i</sup> Dr. Wiseman’s Moorfields Lectures. Lect. i. p. 17. 20. ii. p. 27. iii. et seq. See note at the end.

<sup>k</sup> Rhemists on Acts xv. 28. cited by Dr. Hey, Lectures, b. iv. art. xxi. sect. 12.

<sup>l</sup> *Tractatus de Ecclesiâ Christi, ad usum Theologiæ candidatorum.* Accedunt duæ Appendices, de Traditione, et Conciliis Generalibus. Autore L. Æ. Delahogue. Dublin. 1809. p. 166. cited by Bp. Marsh, *Comparative View of the Churches of England and Rome*, p. 37.

<sup>m</sup> *De Romano Pontifice*, lib. iv. cap. ii. See Bp. Marsh, as above, p. 36.



matters of faith. But this portentous claim we repudiate altogether, not only as not proved, but even as incapable of proof. It is not presumptuous to say "incapable of proof," considering the acuteness and learning which have been employed upon the proof in vain. And why employed in vain? but because the proof has been constructed upon insufficient presumptions, and texts of disputed meaning. No presumptive arguments, from the supposed insufficiency of the Scriptures, from the advantage, expediency, the alleged necessity, of an Infallible Interpreter, can prove the *fact*, that such authority has been committed to the Church; nor, again, can that fact be proved by any arguments from the words of Scripture, so long as the meaning and application of the passages are themselves disputed, and the dispute can only be determined by that authority of the Church which is the very point in question. Take, for example, any the strongest passage which the Romanist alleges, such as the closing words of our Lord upon earth, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth, Go ye therefore and teach all nations,—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world:" or take all the prophetic descriptions of the Christian Church, and the promises of the Comforter, and of the perpetual support of our Lord, and the terms,

how emphatic soever, in which He conveyed His commission to the Apostles and their successors in the Christian Ministry, and what is really established by them all? They prove an authority to teach, but not absolute authority; continued protection, not immunity from error; the Indefectibility of the Church, not her Infallibility.

Yet further, the claim might perhaps be practically refuted, or even reduced to an absurdity, by exhibiting actual instances of contradictions between General Councils; of Councils deposing Popes, and Popes neglecting Councils"; or by displaying at large the unscriptural errors of that Church which insists upon her own immunity from error. But I forbear to enter into this discussion. Those who are involved in the errors of the Church of Rome suffer no contradictions, it would appear, to shake their faith in her Infallibility. And to those who are not, one example of error, palpable error, repugnant to the word of God, is sufficient to overthrow the claim. Who is there, indeed, that loves the truth, and has any tolerable acquaintance with the Scriptures of truth, if he has chanced to hear the Litany chaunted to the blessed Virgin, or seen her image exalted in a Christian house of prayer, but must deny every pretence to infallible au-

<sup>a</sup> See Dr. Hey's Lectures, vol. iv. p. 99. 107. art. xxi. sect. 5. 16. and Mr. Newman on the Prophetical Office of the Church, Lect. iv. p. 149.

thority in that Church which can tolerate the fearful impiety? nay which can more than tolerate, can palliate, excuse, sanction, encourage, any thing so utterly unscriptural and unchristian as adoration of whatever kind, or under what denomination soever, offered to a dead woman or her departed spirit?

2. But it will be said again, and by Protestants and even members of the Church of England, “ True, we deny Infallibility to the *Church of Rome*, for she is but a branch and a corrupt branch of the Universal Church; nor do we concede Infallibility at all to the *Existing Church*, as at least she exists at present, the East divided from the West, and either branch rent and torn by multiplied dissensions; but the *Universal Church* of Christ, whilst she was *One* and truly Catholic, had the promise of our Lord’s continual presence, and was the abode of the Spirit of truth, and she did not and could not err. Wherefore the articles of the first Creeds, and the decisions of the first Councils, are to be received with implicit faith, and possess authority absolute and unquestionable, as the sure and certain witness of the Church to the teaching of the Apostles.”

Here doubtless our best feelings are not pained

° See Mr. Russell’s Judgment of the Anglican Church, Introd. p. xii. xx. xxi. And see note at the end.

and shocked as before. The Church no longer seems to say, "Believe in me, and you are safe;" as if she herself were the foundation, and not Jesus Christ. What is gained in modesty, however, is lost in simplicity; and the original foundations of either theory appear alike precarious. For it may be asked, When was the Church truly one? When, since the days of the Apostles, has she acted as a whole, as the Church Catholic? And how shall the assertion be proved, that "the Church Catholic is unerring in its declarations of faith, or saving doctrine?"

For if we must first examine the records of the Church, and determine what divisions are not inconsistent with her Unity, and how long that Unity was preserved, for all practical purposes the theory is not a little embarrassed; much more, if we must proceed to shew in what instances the Church really spoke and acted as a whole, when Apostolic authority had been withdrawn. Do we indeed in any instance literally obtain the unanimous judgment of the Universal Church? Did any Council terminate in unanimity? And if not, what majority decides the question of the real testimony of the Church Catholic, or how shall we determine *à priori* that the minority must be in error? And if we cannot decide these questions, but only infer that a Council could not err from our conviction that it did not err, this is of course no ground

for belief in the principle of its absolute authority.

I am not denying the probability, the very high probability, that the Primitive Church knew and preserved the genuine doctrine of the Apostles. And the use of this probability I have already endeavoured to display<sup>p</sup>. But that we may employ her judgment as unerring, and absolutely certain, we must have arrived at a previous certainty that she could not but have preserved inviolate, in any given instance, the true Apostolic faith. Nor again do I dispute the fact, that in all the more important articles of faith she actually possessed the truth. This is nothing more than the Church of England has long ago admitted by her acceptance of the early Creeds and the principal decisions of the early Councils. But to have attained and to possess the truth, by no means establishes an incapacity to err. We hold of course that the Church of England has attained the truth, but we nevertheless believe her to be fallible. This is not to deny that there are doctrines absolutely true in themselves, or to confound, as it is sometimes expressed, objective truth with subjective; it is only to distinguish between truths ascertained to be such by subsequent examination, and those which we receive as indisputable without examination by reason of our antecedent admission

<sup>p</sup> In Sermons IV, V.

of the unquestionable authority by which they are declared.

We must be satisfied, therefore, antecedently, of the absolute authority of the Primitive Church, before we can receive her decrees as infallible and unquestionable. But where is the satisfactory proof of her infallible authority? or what is alleged in that behalf, but the same precarious reasons to which we adverted before in the instance of the Romanist? Arguments from probabilities which can never prove the fact, and arguments from passages of Scripture, which, whatever gracious promises they may convey of support and aid to the Universal Church, give her no charter of Infallible authority?—Too well we know, that the promises of spiritual aid, of the abiding presence in the Church of our Lord and His Spirit, unspeakably precious as they are, have never been intended to exclude the possibility of moral corruption, neither may they be safely construed to exclude the possibility of intellectual error<sup>a</sup>.

I am constrained, accordingly, to disallow the claim of Infallibility and Absolute Authority, whether advanced in behalf of any particular Church, or of the Church Universal; of the Ancient Church in the period of her comparative unity, as well as of the Modern Church in her state of sad disunion;

<sup>a</sup> See Abp. Whately, *Dangers to Christian Faith*, Essay iii. §. 4. p. 132.

yielding indeed, to use the words of Dr. Jackson, “a conditional assent and a cautionary obedience” wherever it is justly due, but never in any case conceding, except to the original messengers of Revealed truth, “absolute assent and unlimited obedience<sup>r</sup>.” And to the same effect, I apprehend, the English Church, whilst she accepts the decrees of the four first Councils in matters of faith, confesses nevertheless that “General Councils may err,” wherefore, she adds, their decrees have no authority, “unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture:” and whilst she acknowledges that “the three Creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed,” yet does she not presume to mention as the ground for her belief any consent of Fathers, judgment of Antiquity, or authority of the Universal Church, but this only basis of her pure and scriptural faith,—“for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture<sup>s</sup>.”

II. From the assumed Infallibility, then, and Absolute Authority of the Church, which I would entirely disallow, let us proceed, secondly, to other principles which we may thankfully admit,

<sup>r</sup> Cited by Bp. Van Mildert, Bampton Lecture IV. p. 90.  
See also notes *ibid.* p. 291.

<sup>s</sup> Art. viii. xxi.

although not without some qualification and reserve.

1. Thus the *Indefectibility* of the Church is a signal blessing, and ever to be remembered in the investigation of Christian truth.

Weak and wayward as we are, we are not permitted altogether to defeat the gracious purposes of God. We have the promise of Christ Himself, that He will be “alway with us even unto the end of the world;” that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church;” that “the Spirit of Truth shall abide with us for ever.” For we are the inheritors of the “Everlasting Covenant,” and of those merciful declarations, “My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever<sup>s</sup>.” The prophecy speaks, indeed, of obedience rather than of truth and faith; but religious truth and religious obedience are indissolubly united; and so in fact have the promises been hitherto fulfilled much to the same extent in respect of both; never an age recorded of spotless purity, none of unsullied truth, none, however, witnessing a total

<sup>s</sup> Matt. xxviii. 20. xvi. 18. John xiv. 16. Is. lv. 3. lix. 20, 21. Jer. xxxi. 31—37. xxxii. 40. xxxiii. 15—26. Ezek. xxxvii. 26—28. Heb. viii. 10. x. 16.



defection. Amidst the many and deplorable errors and apostasies of individuals and communities, amidst the heresies that have occasionally reigned far and wide, the truth has never been renounced by the Universal Church; it has been often obscured, but never lost; the precious metal tarnished, and crusted over, but not incapable of recovering its original lustre; the fabric of the faith deformed by unsightly additions, but not overthrown; its foundations weakened, but not destroyed<sup>1</sup>.

To these remarkable and cheering facts, of course, we are not entitled to appeal, when we have to inquire, What is the truth; we must believe that we have ascertained the truth before we can take satisfaction in the continued fulfilment of the promises now for eighteen hundred years. But the promises themselves are a guide to truth; they assist us in the investigation. They do not indeed enable us to determine in any single instance that any given doctrine of the Church, however universally taught and received, is necessarily true; because they do not in any single instance exclude the fallibility of the Church, nor teach us in what direction and to what extent error may creep in, and yet truth upon the whole prevail, and the promises stand sure. But this they do; and it is most

<sup>1</sup> See Bishop Van Mildert's Bampton Lecture VIII. p. 222—251. and notes p. 359—365.

important; they afford a strong antecedent presumption, that the universal or the general teaching of the Church in its main outlines, and in the great leading doctrines affecting the foundations of the faith, cannot be wholly erroneous, but must be substantially true, or must at the least have truth for its basis.

2. Hence, again, we may perceive the true value and utility of the principle, that such Christian doctrines must be true, as have been received *every where, always, and by all*.

Obviously, indeed, the application of this celebrated maxim will be so restricted, that it will be practically useless, if we would carry it down to these later days, when there is scarcely a doctrine that has not been disputed by some Christians and in some places. Nay, so early and so insidious were the rise and growth of religious error, that even in respect of the Primitive Church the theorem is hardly ever to be employed precisely in its literal sense. But taken in a practical sense, more or less approximating to its literal meaning, it is of considerable use positively, and negatively of still more.

For what can be more improbable than that the first Christians should have been absolutely unacquainted with any saving doctrine, or of great and serious moment? The absence there-

fore of any Primitive testimony to any alleged truth of this character, whenever it cannot be supposed that the doctrine if known and believed should have been passed by in silence, is a strong negative argument against its truth. Nay, it is almost conclusive against any novel doctrine imposed by any modern assembly as affecting salvation, or Christian communion; against the novelties of Trent, for example, or of the Synod of Dort. Again, the positive force of the argument is by no means inconsiderable. Nothing can be more remote from my meaning than to assert, with some modern writers, that "Catholicity is the only test of truth." It is not to many articles of faith that the test applies at all; and we are blessed with a superior and a supreme authority in the sacred Scriptures. But the truths to which the test is applicable, although few, are most important, the articles for example of the Apostles' Creed. And the universal reception of these and a few other Christian truths even in the earliest days of the Christian Church, wherever the Gospel was preached and received, affords so strong a presumption in their favour, as will not be lightly set aside by any sincere and considerate inquirer after truth. For where indeed was the Gospel, or what was the Revelation, if the universal belief from the very first was only universal error?—And so, accordingly, at the great æra of the

Reformation, when the foundations of the faith were re-examined, and the genuine truths of the Gospel were carefully discriminated from every spurious addition, and not then alone, but by the most considerate Divines from that period to the present age, a great value has been justly assigned,—but saving always to Holy Scripture its sole absolute authority,—to the strong presumptions, as well positive as negative, derived from Catholic Antiquity.

3. But these remarks have yet another application. They carry us on into a kindred subject, and will enable me in few words to state with sufficient accuracy, perhaps, for our present purpose, what I apprehend to be the just use and authority of *Tradition*.

Of that continued stream of traditional instruction, which may be termed *Unauthoritative Tradition*, I have already endeavoured to display at large the signal use and importance as an *Introduction* to Christian truth<sup>u</sup>. But has Tradition no authority? or has it any absolute authority? or does it constitute an integral portion, as some affirm, of the Rule of Faith? To these questions also a practical answer has been returned, in the use which has been already made of Tradition, with reference both to Doctrines, and to Institutions<sup>x</sup>. It will

<sup>u</sup> In Sermons II, III.

<sup>x</sup> In Sermons IV, V.

suffice to add a very few direct observations upon the Theory.

For we may employ the term “Tradition,” with reference either to the *doctrines conveyed*, or the *mode* by which they are handed down. But we need not discuss the mode of conveyance, that is to say, oral teaching, in the first instance, with a gradual admission of the doctrines into written records, but these the writings of uninspired men as contradistinguished from the Holy Scriptures. Few will deny, on the one hand, the possibility that truths of Revelation might be thus transmitted; on the other, the greater uncertainty which would attend the transmission of doctrines by oral teaching compared with written records, or by the writings of fallible men compared with those of inspired Apostles; and the consequent improbability that the Author of the Faith, who, as all confess, consigned some great truths of the Gospel, and very early, to the more certain conveyance, would continue to transmit others by the less certain. But not on any of these grounds do we refuse to receive what the Romanist calls “the unwritten word of God.” We pass by the mode of conveyance, and turn to the doctrines themselves, and to each of them separately, and enquire into the *fact*, whether they have been thus conveyed or not. It is on this point that we are at issue with the Church of Rome. “We refuse nothing

at all," says Bishop Patrick, "because it is unwritten," but merely because it is not proved to have been revealed; we do not dispute the absolute authority of any tradition which can be proved to flow from our Lord or his Apostles, but we deny that any article of faith, not capable of proof from the Scriptures, has yet been traced to this supreme authority. It is a question altogether, not of theory, but of evidence and history. We cannot ascertain the fact that any unwritten word, distinct from the written Word of God, exists at all; and therefore we cannot in this sense admit that the Scriptures and Tradition together constitute the Rule of Faith.

True it is, and much, I think, to be regretted, that even Protestant writers have sometimes appeared to favour sentiments to which they were in fact opposed. But one would merely express his readiness to accept any truth, by whatsoever mode conveyed to him, which shall have been proved to be revealed; another his fond hope, that haply some long lost truth of revelation may yet be recovered by Tradition; another does, indeed, lay it down expressly, that "Scripture and Tradition together are the joint Rule of Faith," yet not one maintains the known existence of Tradition as the unwritten word of God. They refer to no doctrine or system of revealed truths not to be found in His written word; but sometimes speak of the Scriptures

themselves as “ a Tradition,” plainly in another sense of the word ; sometimes of such truths as the Canonicity of the books of Scripture, or their Sufficiency, manifestly truths not of the substance of revelation, but connected with its evidence ; sometimes, again, of the Apostolic authority of certain Rites and Institutions, the ultimate proof of which is still deduced from Holy Writ ; more frequently of the traditionary Form or System of revealed doctrine, the Apostles’ Creed, for example, or of traditionary Interpretations, such, for instance, as were presented at the Council of Nice, as the faith received by the several Churches of Christ—yet evidently still they speak of no unwritten truth, but only of the means and advantages with which the Church has provided us for the more easy comprehension, or better arrangement, of the truths actually contained in the written Revelation.

This is the Tradition, Explanatory, Confirmatory, or by whatever title it may best be designated, which Protestant writers have sometimes joined with the sacred Scripture in their definition of the Rule of Faith ; not intending the “ unwritten word” of Romanist writers, nor any new doctrine, or additional source of doctrine, yet unadvisedly, I conceive, coupling the subordinate authority with the supreme, the means of interpretation with the document to be

interpreted.—As to the proper use and authority of such Traditions, these are distinct questions; and if their authority is not rested upon the supposed infallibility of the Church, they are questions of history, evidence, judgment, not of principle. Let the historical evidence be irrefragable, let any tradition be traced incontrovertibly to the Apostles, its authority is obviously that of the Apostles, and is supreme. In every other case it is presumptive. I am not aware of any tradition which is thus entitled to supreme authority; but the presumptive authority of several is exceedingly high; varying of course in every instance with the proofs of their antiquity and universality, the importance of the subject, the certainty that it was understood and attended to; and not applying, therefore, to interpretations of particular texts, nor to nice and subtle points of doctrine not at first, happily, the subjects of debate. Those, in a word, will be the probable traditions which belong to the general system of the faith, and to the greater and more prominent doctrines, with which, if true, the earliest Churches could not be unacquainted, and which, if they had once received, they could scarcely misapprehend.

To this instrumental use, and subordinate authority of Primitive Tradition, the most Scriptural Christian may cheerfully subscribe; nay, he will pay to Tradition so employed a willing



and a grateful deference, not as superseding inquiry, but inviting it; not as having dominion over his faith, but as the helper of his joy; not as the mistress of Scripture, but her handmaid.

III. And now, at length, in the third and last place, having thus disclaimed such pretensions to Church Authority as appear to me unfounded, and endeavoured to moderate those which may have been advanced too far, I would fain hope neither to be misapprehended, nor to mislead, whilst I conclude with some brief but thankful survey of the abundant PRIVILEGES which we enjoy through the very medium of Church Authority, the authority, namely, of Weight or Influence, with a view to our attainment of the Truth.

1. It is a great privilege that we are born into the Church; that we are no sooner Christians than we are members of a *Christian Society*; never insulated, but introduced at once into a system of mutual dependence; never left to wander at large in quest of truth, without a beacon or a guide, but travelling in a company, the road ascertained, leaders and guides provided. We are inheritors of Christian truth; and we then enjoy the very perfection of our privilege, when we are most exposed to the singularly shallow taint of an “hereditary faith;”

that is to say, when we are baptized in earliest infancy, and imbibe the truths of Christianity with our earliest knowledge, at the very time when the force of natural authority is the strongest, and the disposition to doubt the weakest. And why? not in order that we may never inquire, and examine, and try the foundations of truth with all accuracy; but because it is a blessed privilege to believe, before we can inquire, and pray as Christians, act as Christians, be Christians, long before we can arrive at the capacity and opportunity to weigh evidence and argument,—and yet, which especially deserves our regard and admiration, not without our having already acquired a covenant-title to that spiritual aid which is essential alike to holiness and to faith. For thus it is that the systems of nature and of grace agree in perfect harmony; and the institutions of the Church, the gifts of grace, the capacities and dispositions of youth, and the natural authority of Parents and Instructors, all conspire not to exclude inquiry into the truth and tenets of Christianity, but to bless us with Christianity itself before inquiry is possible.

And what if inquiry never should be possible? or if it should be exceedingly partial and incomplete, from imperfect powers, or slender opportunities, or premature departure out of this preparatory scene?—Does any considerate

Protestant imagine, strangely as our sentiments have been misconceived, that the youngest member of the Church of Christ, who departs this life in His faith and fear, is the less a Christian because he could not have ascertained the correctness of his creed by his own individual examination? We do not thus confound the end with the means; nor do we teach the duty of inquiry, except in proportion to the age, and capacity, and circumstances, and opportunities of the believer.

Too true it is, indeed, that to lean upon authority will often be to imbibe error. But we cannot, if we would, on this account exclude authority. If the young are to be taught at all, they will and they must, in some degree, be it more or be it less, defer to the authority of their teachers. It is the law of nature, and we cannot abrogate it. And if they are taught nothing, where religion is the subject, until they are of age to discard authority, they will only be involved in greater error. Better be the slaves of superstition, than of infidelity; better, far better, that we should even invoke the Saints, than disbelieve the necessity of Mediation; better bow down before an image of the Virgin, (fearful as is such a departure from the truth of religion,) than know nothing of our responsibility, or doubt the existence of the Most High.

Nevertheless, in almost every case, except in that Church which forbids the study of the Scriptures, and makes the belief in her own Infallibility the foundation of all belief, every where else, and partially even there, some inquiry will always go hand in hand with authority, whilst authority will be of essential use as a guide to inquiry. I do not speak of formal and systematic inquiry, but of that tacit, and almost unperceived comparison of the authoritative word with the fallible instructions of Parents and Pastors, which is constantly going forward in a healthful state of the Church; which is indeed almost the sole inquiry of which the majority of Christians are capable; and which, when nothing more is possible, may be abundantly blessed to their salvation. But suppose greater opportunities, more cultivation of the intellectual powers, more exposure to difficulties and doubts, and therefore more inquiry both required and possible; then, again, it is a great privilege that we do not stand alone; that we succeed to the inquiries of our Fathers in the faith; that they have been exposed to the same doubts, have traced out the true course, marked the rocks and shoals, and left their charts in our possession. And not this alone; we have not only the advantage in each successive stage of our progress of the successive authority of Parents, of Ministers, of

the good and the wise who have departed in the faith, and bequeathed to us their testimony, a testimony perhaps which they have sealed with the blood of martyrdom; but we have the collective witness of the Church herself to the truths which she has received and proved, and handed down, incorporated into Liturgies or Offices of devotion, or at least stated and determined in her Confessions and Creeds. And this, let it be gratefully remembered, accessible to the most humble of her members; nay, if there be, as in our own favoured Church, a book of Common Prayer in our native tongue, not accessible alone, but actually possessed by all.

2. But even more than this; for it is true again that any particular Church may err, and if she does not formally deny any essential article of the faith, (as I know not any National Church that errs to this extent,) she may yet have corrupted the truth, or superadded grievous error—then is it no slight additional privilege that we can turn from the authority of any Particular Church to that of the *Church Universal*. That is to say, we can compare the several Confessions of all the several Churches, Protestant or Roman, in the East or in the West, observing their concurrent testimony to the more important truths of Christianity, and inquiring into the reasons of their disagreement on the questions of debate.

And we may ascend higher towards the sources of truth, and pass from this distracted scene to happier periods, when all the Churches were comparatively united in discipline and doctrine, when they all grew and flourished under one common form of Ecclesiastical Polity, and, whatever were the sins and negligences and ignorances and errors of obscure individuals, there were at least no Arian bishops, no Nestorian Churches, no single Church throughout the world that mutilated a Sacrament, invoked a Saint, or excused Idolatry.

We owe it to a gracious Providence that we should even be permitted, after the lapse of so many centuries, and after so many convulsions of Empires and Churches, to consult the records of early Councils, observe their censures of what they believed to be heretical, possess in the Creeds their solemn testimony to what they believed to be the truth delivered to them from the first and approved by Holy Scripture, trace the same truths in the remains of the primitive Fathers, and so connect the teaching of Apostolic men with those authentic and only sacred documents which were bequeathed to the Church by the Apostles themselves. And here again I describe a privilege not restricted to men of great research and learning. The most important monuments of the Universal and the Primitive faith, are contained within a narrow

compass. Nay, even the unlearned members of most Christian Churches possess the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds; and are thus enabled to identify their own belief with the faith of "the holy Church throughout all the world."

And why should it be supposed impossible to use our privileges without abusing them?—Doubtless it is easy, and we should ever remember that it is easy, to confound subordinate instruments with supreme authority, and so to reverence Antiquity, as to forget the Bible. But I have throughout supposed the continual and concurrent study of the Scriptures, and no abdication of our rational powers, but, on the contrary, a rational and discriminating use of various instrumental advantages in order to the more certain attainment of Scriptural truth. It ought not to be difficult, and assuredly it should be our endeavour, to employ *all* the means with which God has provided us for the knowledge of His Holy Word. We may value the testimony of the Fathers, for example, where we distrust their judgment; slight their private teaching and separate opinions, and yet defer to their concurrent decisions and traditionary teaching; esteem their honesty even where we perceive them sliding gradually into error, the mere rhetorical invocation, perhaps, of a departed friend paving the way for the unscript-

tural doctrine of the intercession of the Saints. We may gladly turn to the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds for the primitive arrangement and definite statement of certain important truths, yet never dream, as it has been strangely objected to us, that a Scriptural faith is to be restricted to these articles, or always expressed in these terms. Or we may acknowledge the Athanasian Creed to be a very incomplete exhibition of the whole Catholic faith, and greatly prefer the more simple and reverent phraseology of Scripture, to its harsh and antithetical statements even of those few articles of faith which it sets forth; and yet we may value it highly for its negative uses, as a limit to irreverent controversy, and an important barrier against daring errors, unscriptural doctrines, and presumptuous modes of thought.

In a word, we may at once listen to the Church, and obey the Scriptures; use all the various human instruments, whether securities against error or positive means of truth, with which the Providence of God has blessed us, and yet not for a moment confound them with the Divine. Nay, so natural and reasonable is this subordinate deference to human authority, this considerate use of our existing Privileges, that the unnatural opposition which they have sometimes encountered has assuredly not arisen solely from the perverseness of those who should have



profited by them, but from the indiscretion also of those who proffered them. A thankful use of Church-privileges has been grievously impeded by exaggerated statements of Church-authority. Amidst the continual oscillations of human opinions, if we ever raise the weight too high on the side of authority, it is sure to rise again too high on the side of an unnatural independence. And the converse is no less true. Even at this day and among ourselves we may observe the influence of overstrained views of liberty and independence re-acting upon the minds of others, and generating notions equally overstrained of Ministerial dignity and authority. It may be difficult to hit the exact mean, but let us at least aim at it. If it is easy to nurture a rebellious spirit under the specious guise of independence, it is no less easy, let us recollect, to foster a domineering spirit under the sacred name of Religion, and suffer even a pious zeal for the honour of God to be insensibly corrupted by a jealousy for our own. But the more sincerely anxious we are that all our brethren should enjoy and use their privileges, so much the more careful let us be to recommend them to their acceptance. And never let us lose sight of the obvious but important truth, that there are antagonist principles in the human mind, a disposition to believe, and a disposition to inquire, a spirit of submission, and a spirit of inde-

pendence, of dutiful submission to just authority, and of indignant resistance to usurped dominion; and either class of dispositions has its appointed use. Each of them is to be duly cultivated and properly controlled, and both must be combined in harmony, under the gracious aid of the Spirit of God, if we would avoid false doctrine, heresy, and schism, promote unity and a right faith together, and build up in its true proportions and upon solid foundations the hallowed temple of religious truth.

O Almighty God, who hast instructed thy holy Church with the heavenly doctrine of thy Evangelists and Apostles; Give us grace, that, being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of thy holy Gospel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## S E R M O N   V I I .



1 Cor. xiv. 20.

IN MALICE BE YE CHILDREN, BUT IN UNDERSTANDING BE  
MEN.

IF a right use of the Church is of vast importance in order to a wholesome knowledge of the Scriptures, the proper exercise of our own UNDERSTANDING is essential to both.

This is a truth so obvious, as scarcely to be controverted except by the mere Fanatic. Even he who maintains the absolute authority of the Church, must at least allow to her members one deliberate act of their own reason ; whilst those who only yield a just deference to her authority will of course be called upon for many. Admit with the Romanist the absolute Infallibility of the existing Church, and no doubt it covers all her declarations of doctrine ; we must accept them all with implicit faith ; but we must still have determined by a prior act of judgment the cor-

rectness of the claim. Or allow only the Infallibility of the Primitive Church whilst she was one and truly catholic, this will in fact extend only to a few doctrines, and leave the truth of every other to be weighed and examined. But if, with the Church of England, we see no proof of the Infallibility of the Church any where, and consequently disallow in every case, but that of Christ and His Apostles, the claim of absolute authority, then the province of Reason, however it may require to be regulated and restrained by the nature of the subject, or by our duty to the Divine Author of Revelation, will be co-extensive with the whole range of Christian truth.

How is it then that even from Protestant writers, and at this day, we hear so many invectives against the exercise of Reason in matters of Religion? Faith is invidiously contrasted with Reason, and the cultivation of our moral affections with that of the intellect; as if the principle of Faith excluded argumentation, and, the heart being right, the judgment must of necessity be sound. Or sacred criticism is discountenanced; we must study the Scriptures, it is said, not with a grammar and a dictionary, but with a Catechism and a Liturgy; as if Criticism and History were incompatible, and traditional interpretations were not to assist, but to supersede the consideration of the text itself. Or the very examination of the Christian

Evidences is censured, as a profane and irreverent re-opening of questions long ago decided ; as if Christian truth were a person once tried and acquitted, and therefore not to be again submitted to trial, instead of being, as it is, a subject ever new, and of the deepest interest to each individual man in each successive generation<sup>a</sup>.

But when these and similar sentiments are expressed, as they often are, neither by fanatical enthusiasts, nor by covert assailants of religious truth, but by men of learning, ingenuity, and sincere piety, shall we greatly err if we ascribe them for the most part either to overstrained conceptions of Church-authority, or to an overwhelming dread of the abuse of human Reason ?

Of Church-authority, however, its use and limits, I have formerly endeavoured to speak<sup>b</sup>. At present it may be expedient, before I advert to THE PROPER EMPLOYMENT OF OUR REASON UPON MATTERS OF RELIGION, briefly to notice some of the mischievous or fatal consequences resulting from its ABUSE.

I. The abuses alluded to are not, of course, the illogical exercise, but the misuse and misap-

<sup>a</sup> See British Critic, No. LI. Articles on the Evidences, and upon Ancient MSS. And see note at the end.

<sup>b</sup> In Sermons IV, V, VI.

plication of our intellectual powers; not incorrect reasonings or faulty judgments, but the undue exaltation of the intellect, that is to say, of the human understanding generally, not necessarily of our own in particular<sup>c</sup>, and its undue, because unrestrained, employment upon subjects only in part within its grasp. And let it be carefully observed, that some of these abuses of Reason are by no means confined to men of a sceptical turn of mind verging upon infidelity, but are committed every day by Christians of fervent piety, and of what are often called high religious views.

1. The most fatal of these abuses are obviously those which tend to set aside the very possibility of Revelation. If when God condescends to reveal any truth to man, man is to accept it or not, according to his judgment not of the evidence in its favour, but of the nature of the truth itself, Revelation, it is plain, must be confined within those narrow limits which our own narrow understandings shall be pleased to draw. But whatever the Allwise has indisputably declared, that we must implicitly believe.

True, He has previously implanted within us a Rational Mind and the Moral Sense; and we

<sup>c</sup> Archbishop Whately, Notes to Archbishop King's Sermon on Predestination, p. 102, 103.

could not receive any subsequent revelation contradictory to what they had already disclosed to us with absolute certainty. But of what do they inform us with absolute certainty? Of scarcely any thing; some elementary principles, perhaps, excepted of number and quantity, some conclusions in Mathematics flowing in reality from our own arbitrary Definitions. If the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, really declared, as is sometimes supposed, that the same Persons were three and one in the same sense, that would be contradictory to our reason, being a contradiction in terms, and therefore incapable of being received. But there are no revealed truths of this character. And it is no ungrateful disparagement of these gracious gifts of Reason and the Moral Sense, all-important as they are, to affirm, that there is scarcely any thing within the province of Truth or Morals, of which they inform us with such certainty, that the truths of Revelation, although in some few instances appearing at first sight to contradict them, may not possess through the overwhelming force of the evidence a far higher certainty.

Hence the reasonableness of that astonishing act of faith, when the Father of the Faithful at once obeyed the Divine command to “offer up his only-begotten son,” and yet believed the promise that “in Isaac should his seed be called;” accounting that God was able to raise him up,

even from the dead ;” and thus obeying and believing against the most urgent dictates of the natural sense, and affections, and understanding, upon the still surer and infallible evidence vouchsafed to him, that the promise and the command proceeded from God<sup>d</sup>. The abuse of reason of which we speak exactly reverses this process. Where Abraham’s faith stood upright, there this perverted reason stumbles and falls ; and when it can detect no flaw in the evidence of revelation, presumes nevertheless by its own light to judge of the truths revealed ; allegorizes the history of the Fall, for example, or rejects that of the Judgment upon the Canaanites, preferring the dim notices which nature had presented of the Divine Benevolence to the clearest revelations of His Providence and His Justice. Just so at Athens and in Jerusalem, the Resurrection was mocked and derided as a thing incredible and impossible, by those who doubtless conceived that they were the most devoted followers of Reason, when in truth they neither knew the Scriptures, nor that which Reason might have taught them, the infinite power of God. And in our own age and country, those who pride themselves perhaps upon their superiority to this ignorance, and are fond of exhibiting the Resurrection and Life Eternal as the very truths to which Christ set His seal, yet

<sup>d</sup> Heb. xi. Gen. xxii.



reject that great truth of revelation, upon which, as we believe, our sole claim to eternal life is founded, acting upon the self-same principles of perverted reason, which moved the Sadducée to deride the doctrine of a life to come. The doctrine of the Atonement is incredible, it is said, because it is calculated to give to the minds of men “ unfavourable impressions of the Divine government, which, if not corrected by something else, must have an unfriendly aspect upon their virtue ;” or it is inconsistent with the goodness or benevolence of the Deity, of which His justice is only a modification, and which is “ His sole governing principle.” Dr. Priestly, it is true, argued against a mistaken theory of the Atonement. But the principle of the argument is not affected by the error. That fatal principle is, that no revelation is credible which we cannot altogether understand, or account for and explain, or perceive to be practical, or reconcile with our previous knowledge<sup>f</sup>. The doctrine of the Trinity is incredible, for we cannot compre-

\* See History of the Corruptions of Christianity, vol. i. p. 168—170, cited by Mr. Veysie, Bampton Lecture VIII. p. 210 et seq.

<sup>f</sup> *Etsi Scriptura pluries dixisset Christum esse Deum, sed id tamen non crediturum, quia Ratio nempe ipsi dictet, illud omne quod ea assequi non potest, pro absurdo esse habendum.* Quoted from Smalcus, a Socinian writer, by Stapfer, in his *Inst. Theol. Polem.* tom. iii. p. 364. See Notes to Bp. Van Mildert's Bampton Lecture, p. 285, 286.

hend it ; a vicarious sacrifice is incredible, for we cannot explain it, or reconcile it with the idea of the Divine Justice or Goodness ; Prayer itself is absurd, for why should we inform the Allwise of what He already knows ?—This is *Rationalism*. It is in truth unreasonable ; for right Reason would have taught us even to expect in a Divine Revelation things surpassing our previous conceptions, not to be wholly understood, running up into mysteries inscrutable. It is plainly a perversion of Reason to make our first instrument of knowledge the measure of every other, to make Reason the judge of Revelation, one gracious gift to shut out another. And it is plainly an abuse which is boundless in its principle, and in its effects may be fatal ; neither revealed doctrine nor inspired writing is excluded from its operation ; and even Heresy is not so much its natural result, as Apostasy and utter Unbelief.

2. Nevertheless it is exceedingly remarkable, that a mistake *akin to Rationalism* has sometimes sprung up even in religious minds. The fatal abuse of which we have just spoken may have occasioned a painful suspicion, that its supporters were insincere in their profession of belief ; that if they would not openly assail the Lord of life with swords and staves, they would betray Him with a kiss ; but the error to which I would now advert has grown out of a pious, however

incautious, endeavour to advocate and maintain the cause of Christian truth.

For, although it is true, that whatever God has undoubtedly revealed, that we must implicitly believe; and it is further true, and was even to have been expected antecedently, that Revelation contains many doctrines to be understood only in part, in part mysterious and obscure; nay, that every truth of revelation runs up into some mystery impenetrable by our finite understandings—so it is even in our knowledge of earthly things, much more of heavenly—nevertheless, it has pleased Almighty God, in the book of grace as of nature, to afford us glimpses of His infinite wisdom, to adapt His dispensations to the nature of man, and permit us to trace the connexion of successive Dispensations, and something of the system of revealed doctrines, and something of their fitness to influence our minds, purify our affections, excite and cherish every latent principle of virtue and holiness. Hence a variety of what we are accustomed to call *Internal Evidences* of Revelation—a beautiful subject of devout contemplation, on which pious and ingenious minds have delighted to expatiate, and which is, perhaps, unconsciously pursued by very many more to their continual profit and edification.

But hence also, occasionally, incautious men have so extolled these internal evidences of truth, as to make their existence, and our perception of

them, essential to our very belief. “ There is a principle of our nature,” says a popular writer on this subject, “ which makes us dissatisfied with unexplained and unconnected facts—and which teaches us to believe or disbelieve in the truth of any system which may be presented to us, just as it appears adequate or inadequate to afford that explanation of which we are in pursuit.” Again, as to the object of Revelation, “ The hallowed purpose of restoring men to the lost image of their Creator, is in fact the very soul and spirit of the Bible ; and whenever this object does not distinctly appear, the whole system becomes dead and useless.” Or, as to the system of Revealed truths, “ The doctrine of the Atonement is the corner-stone of Christianity, to which all the other doctrines of Revelation are subservient—they radiate from this as their centre. In subservience to it, the distinction in the unity of the Godhead has been revealed.” Or, again, “ In order to understand the facts of Revelation, we must form a system to ourselves ; but if any subtilty, of which the application is unintelligible to common sense, or uninfluential on conduct, enters in our system, we may be sure that it is a wrong one<sup>g</sup>.”

<sup>g</sup> Erskine on “ Internal Evidence,” p. 1, 2. 96. See an ingenious Essay, to which I am indebted for this section, in the Tracts for the Times, No. 73, “ on the Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Religion.” See note at the end.

Now it is devoutly to be hoped, that the authors of these sentiments have not acted upon them. Nay it is obvious, that they were not themselves led into Christian truth by the path which they would trace out for others. They did not discern Christianity by virtue of reasonings based upon the very principles of Rationalism. They were Christians before they observed those internal evidences which they would recommend ; but having perceived and admired them, they began to treat what were indeed strong *confirmations*, in some instances, of the divine origin of revelation, as the necessary evidence of divine truth in every other. What was true of some doctrines, they rashly concluded must be true of all. They made their partial knowledge the test of what was important in Revelation, nay the test of what was true ; and thus incurred the peril of making Reason,—not, indeed, uninformed human reason, for their very arguments were built upon a certain acquaintance with truths revealed—but still their own reason and understanding, the measure and limit of revealed doctrine.

3. But let us not imagine that these are the only modes in which Reason may be misapplied, and by religious men, in the pursuit of Christian truth. It is a very common error, on the contrary, among religious men,—and one which is far more likely than those which have just been

mentioned, to entangle Theologians circumstanced as we are—to indulge the vanity of the intellect in attempts to explain the Christian doctrines, and so, adding to them even unawares, to reason upon the words of Scripture, construct theories upon the doctrines, and pursue them into consequences beyond the limits prescribed to us by Revelation.

We know, for example, that the Son of God took on Him the nature of man, we also know that He offered Himself upon the Cross a sacrifice for our sins; and these facts being known, we may well believe that in some mysterious way His Divine nature was essential to the Atonement, and we have distinct intimations in Holy Writ that in some mysterious way the Divine Justice was propitiated by the sufferings of the Redeemer. Nevertheless, we neither know, nor can we understand, the principle of a vicarious sacrifice; and we travel beyond the bounds of our actual knowledge, whether derived from reason or from revelation, when we lay it down that the infinite justice of God required an infinite sacrifice, or that the Divine nature of the Messiah enabled Him to make an adequate satisfaction to the Divine justice. Now whether this theory of an adequate satisfaction to the Divine justice is correct or not, I neither affirm nor deny; I merely mention it as an instance of a human addition to a revealed doctrine, intended,

probably, to explain and recommend the truth, but quite as likely, perhaps, to prove a stumbling-block in the way of its acceptance ; as in the instance already mentioned of Dr. Priestley, who argued against this very theory, as if it had actually been the revealed and Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement.

And so in many other instances have men of great and sincere piety unconsciously pursued Christian truth beyond Revelation ; and, without any ill effects, possibly, upon their own minds, have seriously shocked and offended those of others, and not those of sceptical men or of a doubtful orthodoxy, but of Christians as sound and sincere as themselves in the true faith of Christ.

To this class belong the theories of some of the Fathers, and of most of the Schoolmen, who would appear to have compensated themselves, as it were, for their submission to Church-authority by their unlicensed speculations on sacred subjects, where the Church had not prescribed the line which Reason was not to overstep. And shall we imagine that these are dangers passed away ? Whatever may be the progress which the race of man is gradually making towards a better condition of the mind, it is a very slow progress, assuredly, and continually interrupted ; and our natural powers and tendencies are the same, our temptations similar ; and few and

fleeting are the years in which each individual of every successive generation is permitted to train his powers and know his dangers. I apprehend, accordingly, that all the peculiarities of Calvinism are recent instances of similar errors ; the peremptory decisions of human reason upon subjects which Revelation has left undecided. And we may still hear from pious lips indiscreet endeavours to penetrate into mysterious doctrines, those, for example, of the Trinity and the Incarnation, and pursue them into their apparent consequences, with a precision and minuteness, and point, and contrast, unknown alike to the Scriptures and the earliest Fathers ; and such as I will not express in words, lest what some regard as the language of reverence, should appear to others painfully irreverent. For let us not forget the various constitutions of equally pious minds, and the consequent need of mutual forbearance, nay, and of mutual correction ; whilst some are disposed to dwell too much upon the facts of Revelation, others upon its doctrines ; some upon the devotion of the heart and affections, others upon the submission of the understanding ; some upon the truths which are more obviously practical, others upon the more abstruse ; some upon those doctrines which are brought the most within our comprehension, others with a peculiar delight upon those which are encompassed with an awful and mysterious



darkness. Neither let it be forgotten by those who enlarge the most upon the mysteries of Revelation, dwell upon the childlike submission of the intellect, and magnify Faith almost as if they decried Reason, not only that they may incur the serious guilt of “causing offences,” and obstructing the path to Christian truth by impediments of their own devising, but that they may even impair unconsciously the texture of their own faith and piety; learning insensibly to prefer human Creeds to holy Scripture, to indulge a captious, inquisitorial, uncharitable spirit in their censures of the language of their brethren; nay, with singular inconsistency whilst they seem to bow the understanding before the mysteries of heaven, gratify the taste of the natural man for over-curious refinements, or the daring flights of a speculative reason.

II. Fearfully important, however, as are some of the various and even opposite abuses and misapplications of Reason upon which I have animadverted, they have been noticed only for our warning. Far from deterring us from assiduous endeavours after the *right use of our Understanding*, they should rather excite us to make them as the more carefully, so the more strenuously; even until we attain to a manly perfection in our understandings, according

to the full import of the Apostolic precept, *ταῖς φρεσὶ τέλειοι γίνεσθε*. And this, upon the evident principle, that we are *responsible* for the right use of whatever advantages God has bestowed upon us. Our Reason is such an advantage; and that it is to be employed upon religious subjects, He Himself has demonstrated by His own continual appeals to our minds and understandings throughout the whole history of Revelation, not to mention express directions, more or less explicit, that we should “judge what is right;” “search the Scriptures;” “prove all things, hold fast that which is good <sup>h</sup>.”

Hence the right exercise of our Judgment and Reason in the pursuit of Christian truth becomes a necessary DUTY. Not, of course, a duty incumbent alike upon all persons at all times; but, like Benevolence and every other duty, expanding or contracting with our respective capacities and opportunities, and so varying in every possible degree from the almost latent principle, up to the highest exercise of the duty of which we are capable. Nor, again, that this advantage is to exclude the use of every other privilege with which we may be endowed; what could be more unreasonable? nor yet, that our understandings are to be exercised upon

<sup>h</sup> Luke xii. 57. 1 Cor. x. 15. John v. 39. Is. viii. 20. xxxiv. 16. Acts xvii. 11. 1 Thess. v. 21.

sacred subjects without restraint or limitation, whether from the nature of the subject, or the nature of the mind itself; rather is it one of the very offices of Reason to discover these limits, and to observe them is our best wisdom.

With these brief observations I may be permitted to dismiss this part of a subject, to which I invited your attention, and that of the public, not very long ago<sup>i</sup>. And I may proceed to notice some of the instances in which the Understanding may be legitimately and beneficially employed either upon the *Evidences* of Revelation, or its *Substance*, or the various *Subsidiary means of investigating the truth*.

1. Thus, it is the express direction of an Apostle, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear<sup>k</sup>.” The spirit of the precept extends to a knowledge of the *Evidences* of Christianity, and the proof of the Canon of Scripture, its Authority, Inspiration, Sufficiency, and to the negative argument as well as the positive, the disproof of spurious Scriptures, or the abatement of the authority

<sup>i</sup> In a Sermon upon the Duty of Private Judgment, preached before the University of Oxford, Nov. 11, 1838, and published 1839.

<sup>k</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 15. See the notes of Erasmus and Grotius on this verse in the *Critici Sacri*.

of Apocryphal,—a wide and ample field for the best exertion of the Understanding. And although the Evidences of Religion, like Religion itself, are addressed to the whole man, to the heart and the affections, to hope, and love, and fear, and even to the Imagination, as well as to the Reason, still I trust I may be permitted to assume, that Reason must hold sway and dominion over them all, if we would be secure against Infidelity, Superstition, or Fanaticism, or, at the least, some of the slighter forms of kindred error<sup>1</sup>.

I am speaking, it will be perceived, of the province of the Understanding, and the extent of the Apostolic precept in general; and I would by no means assert, that every Christian either need, or can, trace out all the Evidences of Christian truth for himself, or unfold them to others. No doubt the answer of a holy life is the best and most convincing evidence which very many can offer of the sincerity of their faith; and by a simple reference to the authority of their teachers some will fully satisfy the spirit of the injunction. For a sufficient authority is a sufficient reason for our hope, and to judge of moral evidence is not the province of all persons or of every age. But the answer which is suitable to the child, the peasant, or the layman, may very

<sup>1</sup> See the Preface to Bishop Butler's Sermons at the Rolls. See also a full discussion of this subject in Archdeacon Goddard's Bampton Lecture.

ill become the parent, the man of education, or the Christian Minister. When, and by whom, and how far the precept is to be obeyed, are questions to be determined by reason and conscience; questions of propriety and discretion,—and therefore, let it be carefully observed, questions on which it is to be expected that indiscreet decisions will be sometimes pronounced. Still, the indiscretion of others will not excuse our neglect of duty. If the Christian evidences have been prematurely pressed upon the intellect of the child, we are not therefore to withhold them from the manly understanding. If they have been so treated as to obstruct a wholesome deference to authority, or hinder the growth of faith, or even to shock our best feelings, by some irreverent familiar scrutiny, for example, of the character and actions of the Divine Saviour<sup>m</sup>—let none of these things tempt us to the opposite errors of teaching all Christians to lean solely upon authority, and always to substitute conviction for evidence, and to decline the devout and grateful contemplation of those intrinsic signs of truth which abound throughout the Scriptures, and are the proper food of an habitual piety.

For piety no less than charity demands the exercise of our reason upon the evidences of

<sup>m</sup> See Tract for the Times, No. 73, where several faults of this kind are justly attributed to Mr. Abbott.

truth ; and God Himself is the author alike of the Revelation and of its proofs. He has accredited His messengers by miraculous powers, and accumulated His miracles especially at the times of special need ; as, for example, at the three great æras of miracles, when pure Religion was to be established by Moses, or restored by Elijah, or fulfilled and completed by Christ Himself : and the growing and enduring evidence of Prophecy proceeds from Him ; and He has thickly sown the book of Grace, as well as the book of Nature, with those internal proofs of His Wisdom, Goodness, and Truth, which are the more abundantly discovered, the more we advance towards the perfection of piety as well as understanding. And if one of His servants, in these later days, has been enabled to refute objections by unfolding the Analogy of Religion to the Constitution of Nature, or another to prove the genuineness of Apostolic writings by the natural and inherent characteristics of truth, far from despising or decrying their efforts, we are to use them gladly, and even ascribe them to the same gracious Providence<sup>n</sup>.

True, we are not therefore to be always arguing, always proving, as if we were ever inquirers and not believers. And if we have been blessed with the inestimable advantage of inheriting the Faith through a long line of faithful men from the

<sup>n</sup> Bp. Butler, Analogy &c. Dr. Paley, *Horæ Paulinæ*.

Apostles of Christ, we are not to forget the two-fold privilege thus conferred upon us, first of being Christians before we could prove the truth of Christianity, and next of knowing what the truth is, and how it is established ; not having to search here and there for truth, if haply we may find it, but already in possession of the Scriptures, the Church, the Sacraments, the Faith itself, and knowing also upon what foundations they are to be established securely. But neither are we to speak or act as if Christianity did not rest upon secure foundations ; lest we should even incur the guilt of betraying the cause of truth, and endangering the souls of men, and hiding from them the very characteristic distinction of the true Religion, by which it is widely separated from every other, that it is indeed founded upon Evidence, and addressed to our Reason°.

2. And these observations are almost equally applicable to the due exercise of our Understandings upon *the substance of Revelation*, and the right *Interpretation of Holy Scripture*. No abuses of Reason upon these subjects, how great or how frequent soever, must induce us to hide our talent in the earth when we are responsible for its employment. And if responsible at all, we are

° Abp. Whately on some of the Dangers to Christian Faith, Essay II. §. 2. Disc. I. §. 3.

accountable doubtless for the use of the *best* means of attaining the truth, and of *all* the best and most suitable means within our reach, and required by our respective offices or opportunities.

Hence, for example, the use and propriety, and, in some instances, the necessity, of Learning and Sacred Criticism. The very language of the New Testament in the original can scarcely be known exactly and thoroughly without an intimate acquaintance with the Greek Classics, and with the style of the Septuagint, and with some of the Oriental tongues, at the least the Hebrew and Syriac and the Rabbinic dialect. But it is further important to “compare spiritual things with spiritual,” and “rightly to divide the word of truth;” we must exercise our best powers of Reason and Judgment in the Analysis of Scripture, in distinguishing the objects of the several Dispensations of Revealed Religion, and the different occasions on which the various sacred writings were composed; and we must study the Analogy of faith, and pay attention to Verbal, Historical, and Doctrinal analogies, to the Figurative and Mystical Interpretation of Scripture, and other similar subjects too familiar to the Theologian to require further notice in this place. Serious errors have resulted from inattention to these pursuits. And surely it is possible to value sacred learning, yet not to over-



value it ; not to substitute learning for piety, or independence of mind for a candid spirit, nor to imagine that Theology and Criticism are necessary to all Christians or at all times, or that Translations of the Scriptures are insufficient in order to a saving faith in that Gospel which was preached emphatically “ to the poor<sup>p</sup>.”

But, again, when the sense of Scripture shall have been ascertained, Reason and Judgment must be employed on the most important of all subjects, not certainly to determine whether what is admitted to have been revealed shall be rejected or received, which is impiety ; nor yet to carry forward sacred truths beyond the limits of Revelation, which is the frequent error of mistaken piety ; but to ascertain whether received doctrines and practices are or are not Scriptural, to understand and apply the doctrines of Revelation correctly, sometimes to unfold and arrange them, and observe their mutual dependence, more frequently to estimate aright their relative importance.

Doubtless upon occasions we may have a

<sup>p</sup> See Bp. Marsh’s Translation of Michaelis’ Introduction to the New Testament, vol. i. chap. iv. sect. 13. Elsley’s Annotations, Introduction, p. xxi—xxvii. Bp. Van Mildert’s Bampton Lecture on Scripture-Interpretation, particularly Sermons V, VI, VII. Rev. John J. Conybeare’s valuable Lectures on the Secondary Interpretation of Scripture. Mr. Lancaster’s Bampton Lecture on the Popular Evidences of Christianity.

hazardous course to steer between the difficulties and dangers on the right hand and the left ; but this is of the very essence of a probationary state. Hence the Berœans, when they had heard the preaching of an Apostle, are commended for two things, not only because “ they received the word with all readiness of mind,” but also “ searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Hence likewise our Lord Himself, when indeed He reveals a new doctrine, declares it with an absolute authority, “ I am the resurrection and the life ;” “ Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ;” yet even then perhaps He vouchsafes to communicate a reason, “ the Father hath given to the Son authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man ;” but when His doctrine may be ascertained from earlier revelation, He makes direct appeal to the reason of His hearers, “ Now that the dead are raised even Moses shewed at the bush—for God is not a God of the dead but of the living.” “ If David then call Him Lord, how is He His Son<sup>a</sup> ?”—But how much more need have we in these later days to prove all things, and only hold fast that which is good ? The whole work of the Reformation, accordingly, was a vast exercise of the Understanding in

<sup>a</sup> Acts xvii. 11. John v. 39. iii. 3. 5. xi. 25. v. 22, 23, 26, 27. Luke xx. 37, 38. Matt. xxii. 41—45.

this great endeavour; and, surely, not the less a necessary work because not always blessed to a successful issue. Amidst demands so many and so urgent upon the discretion of fallible men, it was only to be anticipated that some might even make shipwreck of important truth; nay, that on subjects of less importance at the least, Churches would err as well as individuals. Hence a variety of new demands upon our judgment, the unavoidable incidents of our probationary state; new sects, new controversies, nay, and half-extinguished heresies kindled into new activity. The most learned Divines, the most intimately acquainted with Christian Antiquity, could not refute the Arian errors of the last century without continual appeals to Reason and Judgment<sup>r</sup>. Various subjects, indeed, of minor importance, as Fasting, Celibacy, the postures and times of Devotion, have been left by the Christian Scriptures, we can scarcely doubt, in a designed and appointed obscurity, for the continual exercise of our discretion and good sense. And, subsequently, the frequent controversies among Christian men, even when they have resulted, as has often been the case, in large accessions to the clearness and certainty of our religious knowledge, have opened nevertheless new fields for the exercise of a sound and pious discretion, by investing the immediate subject of

<sup>r</sup> See Bp. Van Mildert's *Life of Waterland*, p. 73. 150.

dispute with an adventitious importance, and disturbing the proper relative importance of various truths or errors. Hence, for example, the almost exclusive teaching of some one great doctrine, as Justification by Faith only, to the apparent disparagement of others; or the exaggerated estimate of the error of Transubstantiation in comparison of other and greater errors of the Roman Church; or the general and indiscriminate eulogy of the Protestant Faith, as if there were not greater errors sometimes comprehended under that name than all the heresies of Rome herself. Nay, even the more ancient controversies still disturb the sober estimate of truth and error; Sabellianism is even more dreaded than Tritheism; the subtle errors of Nestorius and Eutyches are still viewed through the false medium of the old polemics; nay, from the same cause we are still but too apt to form somewhat exaggerated conceptions of the importance not certainly of the Doctrine itself, but of the Theological Statements, of the mysterious truth of the Trinity in Unity.

3. And now, if in opposition to what has been said it should be urged, that the resources of Primitive Christianity have already superseded these perplexing exertions of a precarious reason, that *the Fathers* are our teachers, and *Christian Antiquity* is our sure and certain guide to the

sense of Scripture and the faith of Christ—I reply, that this is only to point out another and a wider field for the continual exercise of Judgment and Discretion.

Nothing can be more opposite to my design than intentionally to depreciate the treasures of Antiquity. Every where it has been my very object to recommend the combined use of *all* our various advantages, as the dictate alike of Reason and of Conscience. But we cannot have recourse to Christian Antiquity at all, or to any good and saving purpose, without discretion and discrimination. Antiquity is neither our only guide, nor always a safe guide. Yet we may often, and to the greatest advantage, take counsel with those, whom nevertheless we must not follow implicitly and blindly.

Take, for example, the Ancient Liturgies, of which some have even ventured to affirm, “that next to the Holy Scriptures they possess the greatest claims on our veneration and study, nay that they are “far too sacred for human criticism.” And yet it is admitted by the same writers, “that they have been much interpolated, and in parts corrupted;” and how then can they be profitably used without discrimination and a cautious judgment? or what, in fact, are questions of genuineness or of value, but questions of judgment, and of historical research? We are but too apt, in truth, in the study of

such documents to regard them by degrees with all the fondness of an Antiquary, but perhaps without his accuracy. We may forget, possibly, that to ascertain even the Apostolical antiquity of the “*Sursum corda*” contributes nothing to the proof of Christian truth; or, in discussing the remains of distant ages, we may overlook the march of centuries, nay the progress of admitted error. The judgment of two hundred bishops upon the genuineness of the Liturgy of St. Basil may be supposed to be decisive, because it was pronounced only three hundred years after it was written; or we may trace back these monuments for 1400 years, and almost forget that there are four centuries yet behind, that serious errors abounded in the periods to which they have been really referred, and that, consequently, whilst we listen to them, we must also judge them.

Or let us turn to the Canons of those Four Councils which have so long, and on some accounts so justly, received the veneration of Christendom. In few instances in fact do they relate to Christian *truth* at all; and the practical regulations, with which they are almost exclusively occupied, are neither always applicable to an altered, and in many respects an improved, condition of Christian Society such as our own, nor are they always wise. Without adverting to the history of these Councils, I frankly confess I cannot read their Canons without at once assenting

to the sober decision of the Church of England, that "General Councils may err." Whence immediately follows the important consequence, that neither can the Creeds which they drew up be received upon the authority of the Councils, but only because "they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture<sup>s</sup>." Nevertheless, those who would take the Fathers for their masters are bound to look yet a little further into this matter. I am speaking, it will be carefully observed, not of the substance of these Creeds, as if I distrusted that, but only of their foundation: and the more entirely we believe in their truth, the more anxious, surely, we shall be, that none of our brethren should rest them, or even appear to rest them, upon unstable ground. Nor do I by any means assert, that the plain unlettered Christian will miss his way, who, knowing nothing of Antiquity but what is embodied in our Creeds and Liturgies, proceeds at once from the Church to the Scriptures, and easily discovers there the proof of every article of faith which the Church has delivered to him. But addressing myself to those who would lean upon Antiquity, and speak of the authority of Fathers and Councils, as if it superseded the use of their Reason and Judgment, and yet have the means of scrutinizing that authority, they, I would say, are bound to look a little further into this

<sup>s</sup> Compare Articles viii. and xxi.

subject, examine the history of these Councils and of these confessions of faith, compare them also with the various Creeds of the Ante-Nicene period, and making that best exercise of their judgment and reason, for which they are responsible to Him who gave them, consider whether it does not follow from the whole inquiry, that none of these early documents, venerable and useful as they are, have intrinsic authority; that although their general substance, and with few exceptions the substance even of their separate articles, can be traced up to Apostolic times, yet the actual language of the later Creeds (as those of Nice and Constantinople, and much more the Athanasian) is the work for the most part of uninspired men, and subject, consequently, to examination and criticism, and, if need were, to correction; whilst the varied expressions of the earlier Creeds, even if they all proceeded from the lips of Apostles, would yet disprove the hypothesis, that any one form of words was to be rigidly and scrupulously adhered to upon all occasions<sup>1</sup>. Is it not indeed evident, that the language of successive creeds was gradually altered and enlarged as successive controversies arose? Whilst into one of the very earliest of all the extant statements of the faith, as it is collected from Tertullian, there has crept an article concerning the appearing of the Son

<sup>1</sup> See Abp. Wake, *Introduction to Apostolical Fathers*, chap. ii. §. 23. Bingham, *Antiquities*, b. x. ch. iii. iv.



of God to the Patriarchs, which to say the least is but a questionable opinion, and not an article of Christian faith at all.

What then can be more clear than the need of Judgment and Reason in ascertaining the verity and propriety of every article in the most ancient or most venerated Confessions of Faith? Nay, and not only as to their proof, but in our use of Creeds, or our language concerning them, or concerning their history, into what strange mistakes may not even Theologians fall, from the wilful abandonment of those powers of discrimination with which they have been entrusted—gravely repeating such an idle tale as the fable of the contribution of the several articles of the Apostles' Creed by the several Apostles? dropping some four or five centuries in the successive formation of our acknowledged Creeds; speaking of them all as of one age, or of the first age, or as if all alike were stamped with the authority of General Councils, or of the Church Catholic; or confounding their uses negative and positive, their uses in correcting error and declaring or arranging truth, or the object and usefulness of the Apostles' Creed with those of the Athanasian, or, worst of all, the uses of Creeds generally, with those of Holy Scripture?—And what surer method is there of putting to hazard the true uses even of things most valuable, as these symbols really are, than by ascribing to them unreal uses or an undue authority?

Just so as to the Fathers—take them as Individuals, and it is obvious that we must consider the age, country, character, education, advantages of each separate writer. Nay, it would be no less ungrateful than unwise, in many instances, and when their *Testimony* is not the point in question, to forget the superior advantages of later writers, and even our own superior blessings<sup>u</sup>. Is it not a superior advantage, and an invaluable blessing, to have been born and brought up in a Christian country, trained by Christian parents, nurtured in the bosom of an Apostolical Church, instead of being converted, perhaps, from heathenism, brought late into the Church, the whole mind imbued with the prejudices of a vain philosophy, by profession a Rhetorician or a Sophist, or, possibly, a late convert after a life of profligacy? There is no comparison, so far as we are permitted to judge, between the spiritual advantages of Hooker and Butler, and those of Justin, Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine. And accordingly—but no, I will not enter upon the ungracious task of singling out the errors of venerable men, holy men, confessors, martyrs, who, whatever their advantages, or even the more so on account of their disadvantages, have deserved nobly of the Church of Christ. It is sufficient for the purpose in hand to refer to

<sup>u</sup> See Bp. Van Mildert, Bampton Lecture IV. p. 96—100, and 101—106.

the writings of some of my predecessors in this Lecture, who have considered the works of many of the Fathers in the only way which piety and candour can approve, not adverting to their faults without at the same time extolling their merits\*. Only let it be observed, that no age, not even the earliest, and no writings, not even of Apostolical men, bold, faithful, gifted men, disciples of Apostles, or appointed by them to the highest offices, great as is their value, are exempt from this exercise of our best judgment. By this, for example, we must determine whether the Epistle ascribed to St. Barnabas is genuine, and, if genuine, that it is assuredly not inspired; or ascertain what are the genuine Epistles of St. Ignatius, and of these whether, their testimony to the truth being irrefragable, they breathe, however, a tone and spirit in every respect Apostolical†. And how has it been at length admitted, that errors of judgment, and mistaken interpretations of Scripture, are to be detected in the Patristic remains? not in con-

\* See the Bampton Lectures of Mr. Collinson, 1813; Rev. J. J. Conybeare, 1824; and the Rev. W. D. Conybeare, 1839, written independently, from actual study of the Fathers, and with great candour.

† See e. g. Epistle of Barnabas, ch. vii. viii. ix. Ep. of Ignatius to the Trallians, §. v. respecting the Orders of the Angels, and his Epistles generally concerning the respect due to the Orders of the Christian Ministry. See note at the end.

sequence of any decisions of the Church Universal, or even of Particular Churches; but though a sounder judgment gradually and silently prevailing within the Church, by whose influence, we may humbly trust, ancient errors will be by degrees exploded, and Christian knowledge in this department of truth will, with whatever interruptions and aberrations, be upon the whole progressive.

Or, lastly, if we are referred from the Individual Fathers to their general spirit and common consent, the same conclusion appears no less inevitable. Their common consent, indeed, upon some few prominent articles of the Christian faith, and these certainly of the very first importance, is every where discernible. But otherwise, of course, to determine the source of a given opinion or interpretation, to distinguish between the fancy of an individual and his testimony, and ascertain whether the common report of several writers is only successive testimony to one man's opinion, or the index of a truth universally acknowledged, what are all these but so many calls upon our research, and diligence, and judgment, questions of critical and historical probability? Whilst as to the spirit of the Fathers, that requires a yet severer exercise of care and discrimination. For how early and extensive were the inroads of error and corrupt or mistaken practice, concerning the

invocation of saints, for example, relics, asceticism, monachism, celibacy, the undue exaltation of the Christian Ministry? And where there was neither error, nor heresy, nor ignorance, nor subtle refinement, nor a vain philosophy, there was controversy, and, too often, bitter controversy. And the sure result of controversy is to distort, or exaggerate, or tinge with an adventitious colouring, the sacred subjects of dispute. Difficult as it may be, when we are living in an atmosphere of controversy, to recover the sober estimate of religious truths, yet we must endeavour to do so : and surely we are no less bound to exert our best endeavours, with piety and with discretion, to measure the controversialists of former ages by a higher standard, and, even whilst we gladly and thankfully use them, try them nevertheless by a continual appeal to the word of Inspiration. So that, to sum up all, in this as in so many other instances, we must not sacrifice our privileges, nor can we forego our responsibility ; and the treasures of Christian Antiquity invite and demand, instead of superseding, the most discriminating exercise of our Reason.

III. No attempt has been made, in the course of these observations, to determine the proper occasions or precise limits of the duty of exerting

the best faculties of our minds upon sacred subjects. It is impossible to determine abstractedly, when, and how far, and by whom, by the learned or unlearned, by individuals or by Churches, that is, by individuals acting separately or together, in their private or in their public pursuit of truth, the duty is to be discharged. Reason and Conscience after all must pronounce upon the proper limits and occasions as well as subjects for the exercise of the duty.

But if indeed, as the foregoing hints may have sufficed to shew, the Uses of Reason are so many and so important, and yet the Abuses and misapplications of Reason are numerous and awful, clearly we have the greatest need not only to *cultivate and improve with all diligence the faculties with which we are entrusted*, but also with all humility and circumspection to employ the necessary *safeguards and securities against their perversion*. It is obvious that I cannot enter fully into this important subject; but I must not conclude, without briefly indicating the chief sources of our safety and our strength, from within and from without, from moral and religious culture, intellectual training, from man, and from heaven.

For, first, we have the blessed promise of *Divine assistance*; the great, I had almost said the peculiar, privilege of the Christian, the illu-

mination of the Spirit of truth, to develop our Judgment, aid our Reason, and guard us against the innumerable frailties of our fallen nature. May we never fail to make a devout and grateful use of this “unspeakable gift!” There is nothing comparable to this. And without this every thing else is vain and fruitless. Without the “holy inspiration of the Lord we can neither think those things that be good, nor without His merciful guiding can we perform the same.” “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights;” and “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned<sup>z</sup>.” But upon this surpassing subject of Christian thankfulness, I shall have a fitter opportunity hereafter to speak somewhat more at large.

Secondly, we have the great advantage of the *aid of man*. We are never to forget, even amidst the most strenuous exertions of our own understandings, that others also can judge and reason as well as ourselves. The judgments of our brethren are the natural correctives of the aberrations of our own; and it is at once our privilege and our duty to consult them. And just as in the case of spiritual assistance there may be a

<sup>z</sup> James i. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

seeming conflict of duties, but there is no practical difficulty, when we are required to be as humble as if we could do nothing for ourselves, yet as active as if we could do every thing, so also is it in the case before us. Whatever apparent inconsistency there may be, there is no real difficulty in reconciling a modest deference to the judgments of the Church or of our fathers in the faith, with the most honest exertion of our own understandings which our respective abilities will require or justify. We are equally responsible for the use of both our advantages. And these Discourses, I humbly trust, will not have so entirely failed of their intended purpose as not to have shewn, however imperfectly, that our safety lies neither in the exclusive use of our own Reason, nor in blind submission to the judgment of other men, but in the combination of our varied privileges both as individual beings, rational and accountable, and also as members of the great human family and of the Church of Christ.

It follows, in the next place, that in order to our thus making due advantage of the fruits of other men's understandings, and yet a manly and vigorous exertion of our own, we must *cultivate our intellectual faculties* with all assiduity; and not only with assiduity, perhaps, but with a patient forbearance, recollecting that it is the



solid improvement of our faculties which should be our real aim, not the rapid acquisition of knowledge; not forced blossoms and precocious fruit upon a languid stem; not the gratification of the taste, the fancy, the imagination, nor any mental luxury how refined soever. Nay, we must even resist the fascinations of knowledge, and the demands of a superficial and vain-glorious age; and although all acquirements, and the cultivation of all our faculties, and the pursuits of history, eloquence, poetry, may, and should, be rendered subservient every one of them to the great end we have in view, still we must look to the severer studies, mathematical and moral, for the more direct cultivation of the Reason and the Judgment; and we must be content to appear ignorant for a time, that we may be ultimately wise.

Lastly, not alone, but above all, *moral and religious training* are absolutely necessary, if in understanding we would be men—not alone, for what we really need is the improvement of the whole man, the whole soul of man; but yet above all, for in knowledge and intellect, mere intellect and mere knowledge, we are infinitely surpassed, perhaps, by the Evil spirits, but in the moral affections of the soul we have our part with the Angels of God, and their due cultivation is essential to our preparation for heaven.

Whilst as to their influence on the attainment of religious truth, it was our Lord Himself who said, “He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.” He did not mean that a disposition to obey the truth was the only requisite in order to its attainment; for He Himself at other times appeals likewise to our Reason; but this He meant, and less than this He could not have intended, that without obedience to the truth, so far as we have ascertained the will of God, no further knowledge of His truth is to be attained. And how should it be otherwise? It is commonly admitted with respect to all moral questions, all questions of probable as opposed to mathematical truth, that the heart and the intellect must go together, that the will and the understanding must not be opposed, that humility, docility, and a modest deference to superior powers and experience, must be combined with our own proper diligence, and activity, and upright love of truth, in order to the successful pursuit of truth: but how much more evident is the need of teachableness, reverence, love of truth, and love of goodness, in the pursuit of that Christian truth which comes from God, relates to God, and of which the fruits are charity, purity, piety? No wonder, therefore, that we are enjoined to “lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with

meekness the engrafted word which is able to save our souls ;” that it is written, “ God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble ;” that the Bereans are commended both for their diligence and for their “ readiness of mind ;” and that not to have “ received the love of the truth,” may be the fearful cause even of judicial blindness\*. And the awful declaration concerning Prophecy, “ None of the wicked shall understand ;” is it not also applicable to every doctrine which demands holiness of us, or relates to the God of holiness<sup>b</sup>? How is it even possible that he should love the truth, or seek it honestly, who more than suspects that it is opposed to him, and is predetermined not to obey the truth? who neither “ loves what God commands,” nor “ desires what He has promised?” How, indeed, shall the very elements of Christian doctrine obtain admittance into that unhappy soul, which takes no thought of the unapproachable holiness of God, “ who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,” which feels no inward sense of guilt and weakness, no need therefore of a Sanctifier and a Saviour? And whatever other doctrines Revelation may have disclosed, no one, with whom we at least have to do, is so utterly

\* James i. 21. iv. 6. Acts xvii. 11. 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. cf. 1 Cor. iii. 1—3. Gal. v. 19—21. Jude 19.

<sup>b</sup> Dan. xii. 10. cf. Is. vi. 9. Hos. xiv. 9. John vii. 17. viii. 47. x. 27. xviii. 37. Ps. xxv. 9, 12, 14. Prov. iii. 32.

unacquainted with the truth of Christ as not to know, that Heaven is the object which it sets before us, and that the only path to future Happiness lies through present Holiness.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## S E R M O N    VIII.



1 Cor. ii. 14.

THE NATURAL MAN RECEIVETH NOT THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD : FOR THEY ARE FOOLISHNESS UNTO HIM : NEITHER CAN HE KNOW THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED.

IF we could suppose, and, unhappily, the supposition is not altogether imaginary, if we could suppose an inquirer after Christian Truth studying evidences, listening to the teaching of the Church and of the Scriptures, but perplexed amidst the dissonant voices of conflicting interpretations, and not as yet informed that God Himself vouchsafes to be his guide, with what profound gratitude would he receive the gracious intimation ! With what devout and unspeakable gladness would he learn, that there was not only a general presumption that the Author of Revelation would shed His own blessing upon His own work, but a distinct promise of spiritual assistance and heavenly illumination to the humble

student of revealed truth! Nay more, that there was not only a revelation and a promise to this effect, but that *the* great and distinctive doctrines of Christianity were but the various aspects and consequences of those two inestimable truths, “the Lord is our light and the strength of our life,” as well as our “salvation<sup>a</sup>,” the support of our weakness, not less than the propitiation for our guilt; our Sanctifier, not less than our Redeemer!

Now although beyond all question, the infinite condescension of the Holy Spirit of God in supplying the place of our departed Lord, and making His abode with us and in us for ever, is indeed among the truths of Christianity the most familiar to your minds, nevertheless the great doctrine of SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION must not be so briefly noticed, because it is so intimately known. It may rather become us, before we attempt to draw some of the more obvious conclusions from the considerations which have been hitherto offered concerning the Principal Means of attaining Christian Truth, to dwell for a short space upon that *Divine assistance*, which is at once necessary to all other means of truth, and above them all.

I. For, to advert only to a few of the more prominent points in the doctrine of Grace,—to

<sup>a</sup> Ps. xxvii. Dominus Illuminatio. xxiii. Is. lx. 19, 20.

the doctrine of Revelation, namely, concerning *the Holy Spirit* ; and *His offices* ; to the *abuse of grace* ; and yet *its absolute necessity*.

1. Although unhappily it may have, and it has, occurred, that individual Christians, even in our own Church and nation, have not known “whether there be any Holy Ghost,” yet was there never any Church of Christ which did not distinctly confess and teach the existence and Divinity of the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of His gracious influences in order to our Faith, and Obedience, and therefore our Salvation ; not an Ancient Creed has come down to us that does not declare the belief of the Church in the Holy Ghost ; not a Primitive writer who does not state or imply the same doctrine, which was indeed that faith in which holy Martyrs offered up their souls to God, and into which every individual Christian was baptized.

But, in truth, the scanty remains which the providence of God has preserved to us of the Primitive Church are far from being so full or so explicit upon this great subject as the Scriptures themselves. Clement, Polycarp, and Ignatius, do not by any means teach the doctrine with the clearness and frequency of the Apostles Paul, and Peter, and John. From the Apostolical Epistles, as might have been expected of a truth which was embodied in the form of Christian

baptism, it is plain, that with this doctrine even the least instructed, the very babes in Christ, were expected to be familiar: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?—Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" The whole tenor of the Epistles speaks to the same effect. The book of the Acts is a history of the personal intervention of the Spirit in the economy of our salvation, bearing His testimony to Christ, completing the Christian Revelation, and teaching the Apostles where, and to whom, and in what method, to spread the faith<sup>b</sup>. And even the history in the Gospels of the ministry of the Saviour does not close without a distinct account of His also conveying to His disciples such explicit revelations concerning "the Comforter," "the Spirit of truth," "the Holy Ghost<sup>c</sup>," as might almost by themselves, even without the introductory teaching of the Church, initiate the humble student of holy Scripture into the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel covenant concerning the grace of the Divine Spirit.

<sup>b</sup> See, for the Dispensation of the Spirit, Acts i. 4, 5, 8. ii. 1—39. iv. 8. 31. v. 3—9. vii. 55, 56. viii. 5, 6. 14—17. 29. 39. ix. 17. x. 19, 20. 44. 48. xi. 12. 15. xiii. 2—4. xv. 28. xvi. 6, 7. xix. 1—6. xx. 22, 23. 28. xxii. 11. xxviii. 25. See also Lord Barrington's *Miscellanea Sacra*, Essay I and IV.

<sup>c</sup> St. John xiv. xv. xvi.



Yet when it is said that the gracious influences of the Holy Ghost are among the *distinctive* blessings of the Gospel, I am far from imagining that our Heavenly Father has ever withholden His spiritual aid from His rational creatures. Exceedingly brief as are the Scriptural narratives of the early history of man, they record nevertheless four distinct occasions, and some of these implying many more, on which God condescended to converse with man before the Fall<sup>d</sup>. After man's fall from his original innocence, five special instances are noticed, between the Fall and the Flood, of the same Divine condescension<sup>e</sup>. We have other distinct records of the extraordinary intercourse of the Creator with His creatures before the call of Abraham<sup>f</sup>. And even after the selection of one family and one people to be the special depositaries of the oracles of God, there are yet some intimations of prophetic revelations vouchsafed to the Gentile world, to concur with the voice of conscience and of the external creation in bearing witness to God, and maintaining some faint hopes of His Christ<sup>g</sup>. Whilst the history of the chosen race, we all

<sup>d</sup> Gen. i. 28—30. ii. 16, 17, 19. iii. 18—21.

<sup>e</sup> Gen. iv. 6, 7. 9—15. v. 24. vi. 13—21. vii. 1—4.

<sup>f</sup> Gen. viii. 15—17. ix. 1—7.

<sup>g</sup> Bishop Horsley's Dissertation on the Prophecies of Christ dispersed among the Heathen. Davison on Primitive Sacrifice. Numbers xxii. xxiii. xxiv. Matt. ii. 1—12. Rom. i. 19—21. Acts xvii. 22—30. xiv. 16, 17.

know, is one continued record of miraculous interpositions, and express revelations of the Divine will by voice, or dream, or vision, or the Spirit of God which was in His Prophets. “All Scripture,” accordingly, writes St. Paul, “is given by inspiration of God.” And St. Peter, “the Prophecy came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost<sup>h</sup>.”—And not only so, but, over and above these extraordinary communications, there are traces also in the Old Testament of what we are accustomed to call—little reflecting, perhaps, what an infinite exertion of grace the word implies—the *ordinary* influences of the Holy Spirit, vouchsafed not indeed by the Law but under it, not by the earlier Dispensations yet under them, to touch the hearts of men, and lead them, if it might be so, to holiness<sup>i</sup>. Thus of mankind before the Flood it is declared by the Lord, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man;” in Nehemiah and the Prophet Haggai there are remarkable expressions which have, probably, a similar import; Isaiah speaks expressly of the whole house of Israel, as “rebelling

<sup>h</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 16. 2 Pet. i. 21. 1 Pet. i. 10—12.

<sup>i</sup> Datus erat Spiritus sub Lege quidem, at non ex Lege—tam sub veteri, quam sub novo Testamento, magno tamen discrimine—Legis enim temporibus parcè admodùm ac restrictè; sub Evangelio largiter atque effusissimè Bp. Bull, Harm. Apost. Diss. II. c. xi. §. 4. §. 5. See also Mr. Lancaster, Harmony of the Law and the Gospel, ch. vii.

and vexing God's Holy Spirit;" and David prays in the very language of Christian humiliation, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me<sup>1</sup>."

Yet, all these things notwithstanding, let us not be blind to the peculiar blessing of the Christian Dispensation. What are all the notices of the Spirit in the Old Testament, compared with the habitual recognition of His presence in the Church and in its members, which is to be traced in almost every page of the Apostolical Epistles? It is one of the great and marked distinctions between the Old Testament and the New. It gives a different character to these different portions of the Word of God. The Prophets themselves declared beforehand this great distinction of the new covenant. "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh"—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."—"In that day living waters shall go forth from Jerusalem."—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean—a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put

<sup>1</sup> Gen. vi. 3. Neh. ix. 20. Haggai ii. 5. Is. lxiii. 10. Ps. li. 10—12. cxliii. 10.

within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you"—“they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”—“The Lord is in the midst of thee”—“great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee<sup>m</sup>.” And although after the long cessation of miracle and prophecy in Israel during four hundred years, there began to be a return of spiritual gifts coeval with the very dawn of the Gospel, as in the instances of Simeon and Mary, Elizabeth and Zechariah, still, it is written, “the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” For it was to be clearly shewn, we may presume, that He was “the Spirit of Christ” as well as of the Father. Our Lord Himself was to send the Spirit from the Father; and not until He “ascended up on high” did He “lead captivity captive, and give gifts unto men<sup>n</sup>.” Then was that great outpouring of the Spirit which was to set the seal to His religion, and enable the Apostles and first teachers of the Gospel to preach the word “in demonstration

<sup>m</sup> Compare John vii. 37—39. Acts ii. 4. 16—18. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Heb. x. 16. with Joel ii. 28, 29. Is xlv. 3. xii. lv. Zech. viii. 8. xiii. 9. xiv. 8. Ezek. xi. 20. xxxvi. 25—27. xxxvii. 26, &c. Zeph. iii. 15. Jer. xxxi. 31. xxxii. xxxiii.

<sup>n</sup> John vii. 39. Eph. iv. 8. cf. Ps. lxxviii. 18.

of the Spirit and of power<sup>o</sup>." And then also were all Christian men to have their birth not of water only, but "of the Spirit;" to be "all baptized by one Spirit into one body;" "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit;" enabled to bring forth "the fruits of the Spirit;" "sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption<sup>p</sup>." To so great an extent was this true Shechinah of the New Covenant to surpass its typical shadow, the cloud of glory which dwelt between the Cherubim in the tabernacle of old.

But yet further, in this last dispensation, and not, so far as we are informed, before, was the great mystery of the Personality, as well as the Divinity, of the Holy Spirit to be revealed as a distinct article of faith. All Christians were now to be baptized into His holy name. One with the Father and the Son, proceeding from both, indifferently termed "the Spirit of God," "of the Father," or "of the Son<sup>q</sup>," yet in some mysterious way distinct from both, He was now to be "worshipped and glorified with the Father

<sup>o</sup> Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 8. ii. xix. Rom. xv. 19. 1 Cor. ii. 4. 1 Pet. i. 12.

<sup>p</sup> John iii. 5—8. Tit. iii. 5—8. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Eph. ii. 22. iv. 4—6. 30. Gal. v. 16—26. Rom. viii. 1 Pet. i. 1 John iii. 24. iv. 12—16.

<sup>q</sup> Rom. viii. 9—11. Gal. iv. 6. Phil. i. 19. 1 Pet. i. 11. Acts ii. 24.

and the Son together." And, accordingly, He is now described by the inspired writers as exerting a distinct personal agency—if we may presume to speak in most inadequate terms of the mysteries of heaven—discharging peculiar offices in the gracious economy of the redemption of mankind; or, in the words of inspiration, "dividing" His wonderful gifts "to every man severally as He will"—"searching all things, yea, the deep things of God"—"making intercession for the saints according to the will of God<sup>r</sup>." Nay, even by our Lord Himself before His departure was the same mysterious doctrine not obscurely intimated; "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth.—I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.—If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.—The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, He shall teach you all things.—When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me<sup>s</sup>."

<sup>r</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 4—11. (cf. John iii. 8. Heb. ii. 4.) 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. Rom. viii. 26, 27. (cf. ver. 34.)

<sup>s</sup> John xiv. 16. 18. 23. 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7—16.

2. Now whether this great Christian mystery could or could not be shewn to have any immediate bearing upon Christian practice, we must receive and we must teach it simply because it has been revealed. But can it be that there are many minds so constituted as not to feel at once, that the doctrine of the Unity in Trinity is fitted to exert the most overwhelming influence upon our whole souls, our hearts and our understandings, our feelings and our conduct? It appeared right, accordingly, before I adverted to the gracious *offices* of the Holy Spirit in our behalf, to dwell for a few moments upon His Divine essence and His personal intervention in the work of our salvation, that we might think and speak of Him with the greater reverence, seek His aid with more earnestness and gratitude, and above all things endeavour not to “grieve the holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

And indeed I am not solicitous to enquire very curiously into His various offices, His various Gifts or Graces, ordinary or extraordinary. What we seek at present is usually termed the *Grace of Illumination*, given unto us not for the benefit of others, but in order to our own salvation; and not for the discovery of new doctrines, but in order to a saving faith in those which have been already

revealed. And what we are concerned to know and to be assured of is, that whilst this illuminating grace is indeed emphatically “a gift,” a free gift to which we had no natural claim, yet that the Holy Ghost is in truth vouchsafed in order to this end, and that we may seek His grace humbly, earnestly, reverently, but with all gladness and all confidence. This is the assurance we desire for our hope and our prayers. And this the Scriptures evidently confirm. For “the Spirit of Truth” was not only to dwell with the Apostles, to “guide them into all truth,” to “teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever Christ had said unto them,” but He was that Comforter who was to supply the place of our departed Lord, and to abide with the Church “for ever,” “even unto the end of the world.” And Truth, and Faith, were to be among His especial gifts. Not only is it a general doctrine of Holy Writ that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,” but the knowledge and confession of the truth are in an especial manner ascribed to the influence of the Holy Spirit—“No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;” “the fruit of the Spirit is faith;” “the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth<sup>1</sup>.” Thus the promise of His

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 26. xvi. 13. xiv. 16. 18. Matt. xxviii. 20.



aid is clear and sure. But to make accurate distinctions between His illuminating and His sanctifying graces, or to attempt to scan the methods by which He may be pleased to illumine our souls, whether by directly enlightening the understanding, or by dispelling adverse prejudices, inclining the will, purifying or exalting the heart and the affections, these things are needless and unprofitable. "The Holy Ghost is shed upon us so abundantly," says a well-known writer on this subject, that "it is impossible to number the drops of this plentiful effusion, or distinguish them severally which imperceptibly run into one another. Our occasions and necessities may call the application of it differently, as shores give names to the seas that wash them, which yet are indistinguishable parts of the same ocean. But we cannot say here begins or here ends such and such a grace. They are to mend and alter our nature, and therefore mingle with it." Better to believe that as "we want assistance in every faculty," so grace is as various as are our various wants and corruptions, and "the Holy Ghost vouchsafes to dwell in our hearts, that He may influence the whole soul". And better to pray with the Church of England for

James i. 16, 17. iv. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 3. (cf. Matt. xvi. 17. 1 John iv. 15.) Gal. v. 22. Eph. v. 9.

<sup>u</sup> Gloucester Ridley, *Sermons on the Divinity and Operations of the Holy Ghost*. Sermon III. p. 95. 108.

the graces of Illumination and of Sanctification together, that the good Lord may “give to all His people increase of grace to hear meekly His word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit;” that by the guidance of His good Spirit “all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in Unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.”

3. But what gift of Heaven is there so gracious or so awful, that the weakness and corruption of man may not misconceive or misuse it! And the history of the Church presents so many melancholy pages respecting the abuse of the doctrine of Grace, from Montanus to Bourignon, or from the Messalians of Syria down to the Methodists of England, that a few passing words of caution may be requisite on this subject\*. Nay, and they may be requisite even here. Neither the seats of science and learning, nor age and experience, are secure against Enthusiasm. The very unbeliever has imagined himself directed by

\* See Gloucester Ridley, as above, Sermon IV. p. 148, et seq. Dr. Nott's Bampton Lecture, Sermon I. p. 20. 43. and Sermons III. IV. V. Suicer. Thes. Eccles. ad voc. *Εὐχ/ται*. Mosheim, Eccles. Hist. Cent. II. part ii. ch. v. §. xxiv. and Cent. IV. part ii. ch. v. §. xxiv. Cent. XVII. sect. ii. part ii. §. iv. Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, p. 172. (1778.)

a supernatural vision to send forth to the world his attempt to discredit the existence of supernatural revelation. Swedenborg was distinguished by the successful pursuit of Physical and Mathematical Science, was long engaged in active and official life, and had attained the age of fifty-five, before his supposed call to be the medium of a new revelation, or what was equivalent to a new revelation, and to hold a preternatural intercourse with the spiritual world. And the latest schism which has rent the Church of England was occasioned by the Enthusiasm of educated men, members of our own University, admitted to Degrees, elected to Fellowships, occupied in this place with the instruction of youth, called to the sacred Orders of Deacon and Priest in our own Apostolical Church.

It is only not impossible, perhaps, that the actual subject of Enthusiasm should be reclaimed from his delusion. Yet even of this there have been happy instances ; and, under the Divine blessing, the repeated failure of his own predictions has at length convinced the Enthusiast himself, that he had not been prompted by the Spirit of truth. But for ourselves it is very possible, and very necessary to prevent the danger, by the due culture and religious employment of the whole man, body, mind, and soul : endeavouring always to maintain Reason on her proper throne ; not to indulge the Imagin-

ation at the expense of the Judgment; not to waste and enfeeble the body by ascetic rigours, lest we mistake feverish fancies for holy inspiration; not to disjoin pious contemplation from active duties and the offices of charity; not to pursue any one single study, not even religious studies, exclusively; above all to be ever seeking the moral graces of the Spirit, and of these, especially, the graces of “ meekness and humbleness of mind <sup>y</sup>.” If indisposition of mind or body may surrender us a prey to a disordered imagination; vain-glory, ambition, and pride, may work far deeper mischief, even opening a ready way to the delusions of the Evil Spirit; whilst it is the reiterated declaration of the Old Scriptures and the New, that “ God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble <sup>z</sup>.”

And whilst we may thus preserve ourselves from danger, it is possible also that we may undeceive the deluded followers of the Enthusiast. Not that we can prove, perhaps, and why should we attempt it? that new or additional revelations are never more to be expected. It is but too true, on the contrary, and we cannot deny it, that the manifold ignorances, and sins, and divisions, of the Christian community still supply the Enthusiast with a plausible argument

<sup>y</sup> Gal. v. 22—26. vi. 1—3. Col. iii. 12.

<sup>z</sup> Prov. iii. 34. Ps. cxxxviii. 6. Is. lvii. 15. lxvi. 2. Matt. xxiii. 12. Luke xiv. 11. xviii. 14. James iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5.

for the probability of his alleged commission to remedy these fearful evils. But every new division is a new evil. Every separation is either a duty or a sin. We are expressly warned that "false prophets and false teachers may arise." It is therefore our duty to "try the spirits whether they are of God;" nay, and to look well to our own hearts, lest we "heap to ourselves teachers, having itching ears, and be turned unto fables; not enduring sound doctrine; turning away our ears from the truth <sup>a</sup>." Does the new teacher, then, profess only to disclose a new interpretation, some hitherto hidden sense of the sacred Scriptures? That at least is a subject admitting of investigation, and which we are bound to try accordingly, and by the same means with which we are enabled to try the soundness of any other interpretation. Or is he the Prophet of a new Revelation? But the method of Divine Revelation has become to us, as it were, a matter of experience. Whatever the probability or the improbability that the Christian Revelation was complete and final, that the Holy Spirit did indeed lead the Apostles into "all truth," that they no longer, like the Prophets of former dispensations, "enquired and searched diligently," prophesying of some mysterious grace not as yet disclosed; but that, on the contrary,

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxiv. 11. 24. 1 John iv. 1. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

they “preached the Gospel,” of which the end was “the salvation of our souls,” and were enabled, accordingly, to impart to their disciples “all the counsel of God;” and that all which they taught we also at this day inherit<sup>b</sup>—without entering into these things, or considering whether we do not, in fact, know every thing which it really imports man to know in order to his salvation, this at least we cannot but perceive and know, it may be said, by experience, that every Revelation has been hitherto attested and authenticated by Him who gave it, and always by the same credentials, and that every succeeding Revelation has been found to be consistent with those which preceded it. We are not only authorized, therefore, but obliged to look for similar proofs, internal and external, of the reality of any new communication from the same Divine Being; the same consistency with former Revelations, the same evidence from Miracles, or Types, or Prophecies, separate at least if not combined<sup>c</sup>. And, perhaps, it will almost always be discovered, that the Enthusiast himself, by some palpable contrariety between his conduct and his creed, his teaching and that of the Scriptures, gives evident tokens of the human origin of his doctrine.

<sup>b</sup> John xiv. 25, 26. xvi. 12, 13. Acts xx. 26, 27. 1 Pet. 9—12.

<sup>c</sup> See Gloucester Ridley, as above, Sermon IV. p. 153—155. and Dr. Nott’s Bampton Lecture, Sermon IV.

Thus Wesley presumed to ordain Elders, wantonly violating the order of that Church which he professed to revere; Fox suffered women to teach in the churches, in direct opposition to the precepts of St. Paul; and the latest Enthusiasts of our own age and country, with the same literal disobedience to Apostolic authority, permit the utterance of unknown tongues, so at least profanely called, where “there is no interpreter<sup>d</sup>.”

4. Nevertheless, let no extravagance, or excess, or abuse of the doctrine of Grace, cast that all-important doctrine into the shade. Neither Enthusiasm itself, nor any schism which it has occasioned, can compare with Unbelief. And without the grace of the Holy Spirit we cannot believe.

“No one can come to me,” says our Lord, “except the Father which hath sent me draw him.—It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.—No man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father.” And so of our continuance in the faith, as well as of our approach to it; “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 27, 28 34, 35. 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

can ye, except ye abide in me—without me ye can do nothing.” But we know, and have already seen, that the mode by which we abide in Christ or He in us, is by “the Spirit of God dwelling in us.” And all the truth of God is darkness to him who is not taught of God. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned<sup>e</sup>.”

For the creature cannot separate himself from his Creator; nor the disciple of truth from its heavenly Author. It is with the mind as with the body, with our spiritual as with our natural life, with the system of Grace as with the method of Providence. As we are the creatures of God, so we only live by Him; as He has formed our minds and souls, so He sustains them; and as He has vouchsafed to reveal His will to man, so without His continual aid and light man has not sight or strength even to comprehend the knowledge of His truth. Thus when the Apostle first made his open confession of that great prime truth of the Gospel, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” and our Lord therefore pronounced him “blessed,” He added, “for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father

<sup>e</sup> John vi. 44, 45. 64, 65. cf. Is. liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. 1 Thess. iv. 9. Heb. viii. 10. x. 16. 1 John ii. 20.—John xv. 1—7.—Rom. viii. 9—11. 1 John iii. 24. iv. 13.—1 Cor. ii. 14



which is in heaven.” And what was true of him is true of us, “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.” And, universally, of all Christian truth as of all Christian men, “The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth<sup>f</sup>.”

But then, blessed be God for His great mercy, there is not one sinful soul of all our sinful race whom He is not willing and desirous to draw unto Himself. We are graciously informed and assured, that He is ever willing to enlighten those who seek the truth in obedience to His will: that as our Mediator “gave Himself a ransom for all,” even so “God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”—For, “Hath He any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? and not return from his ways, and live?” Nay, “He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” And therefore hath “the grace of God that bringeth salvation appeared unto all men.” “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And “this is life eternal,” said our Lord again, “that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xvi. 13—19. 1 Cor. ii. 10. Gal. i. 16. 1 Cor. xii. 3. Eph. v. 9. and see Dr. Biber’s Standard of Catholicity, ch. ii.

hast sent<sup>a</sup>.”—Whatever our weakness, and short-sightedness, and imperfection of every kind, let us but be willing and obedient, feeling our dependence upon Him, trusting in Him, and seeking His gracious aid, and all our manifold wants are presently supplied by Him. We shall be “powerful by His power, and wise in His wisdom; we shall reap, as it were, the benefit of every Divine attribute, and lose our own insufficiency in the fulness of Infinite Perfection<sup>b</sup>.”

Only let us not mistake the way and the means of heavenly wisdom. The end of Christian truth is our Salvation. Therefore also the method of salvation will be observed in the communication of Christian truth to our souls. It will neither be bestowed upon us arbitrarily nor irresistibly. As “God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,” so it would appear to be the necessary consequence, that He must aid us after one and the same manner in our acceptance of Truth, and in our pursuit of everlasting Salvation; that is to say, gently, persuasively, drawing but not compelling, guiding but not controlling us, working out continually that great mysterious problem, the preparation of free agents for a life to come, without impairing their free will. There was

<sup>a</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4, 5, 6. Ezek. xviii. 23. 2 Pet. iii. 9. Tit. ii. 11—14. John iii. 16. xvii. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Addison.

nothing irresistible even in the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit; how much less in his Ordinary Graces? “The spirits of the prophets were subject unto the prophets.” The blessed Apostles themselves were not compelled to preach the Gospel<sup>l</sup>. Ecstasy, perturbation, indomitable control, are the very marks of Natural Enthusiasm, or of the agency of the Evil one, whilst the characteristics of spiritual grace are gentleness, quietness, and calm. No reason can be given why the same rule should not prevail in the instance of Illuminating as of Sanctifying Grace; and that rule we know from the Scriptures themselves is, that we should “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,” for this very reason, that “it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure<sup>k</sup>.”

And of all these things, what is the practical consequence, but that we must seek the aid of the Spirit by the devout use of *the appointed Means*? “God will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.” Have we any ground to hope that He will give His grace to those who can, but who will not, ask Him? But what is true of one of the means of grace, is true of all; we have no warrant to expect His aid but through

<sup>l</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 32. ix. 16, 17. See also Dr. Nott’s Bampton Lecture, I. p. 10. 25. &c. and Gloucester Ridley, Sermon IV. p. 151.

<sup>k</sup> Phil. ii. 12, 13.

our devout use of all the appointed means with which He has blessed us. Why has He “caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning,” but that we may “hear and read and mark and learn them?” Why permitted us to pray, but that we may use our great privilege? or given us opportunities of public worship, but that we may employ them to our good and to His glory? or appointed the blessed Sacraments, but that they may begin and sustain our new and spiritual life? or built up the ark of His Church, but that within it we may be saved?

There is no real inconsistency in speaking thus of the privileges of the Christian as among the means of attaining Christian truth. The child of the Baptist, we may humbly hope, may be permitted a measure of that illuminating grace, from which the theory of his sect might debar him; and even to the Heathen the overflowing goodness of God will grant beforehand such a measure of the privileges of the Covenant, as may suffice to draw him towards it. But they are *Christians*, for the most part, who are interested in the present Inquiry; they are already baptized; they already believe all the great truths of the Gospel, and they seek to prove them; or they believe in part, and are desirous to apprehend all Christian truth; their humble prayer is, “Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief;” and they have a covenant-title to that

gracious aid which will be granted to their earnest prayer—only not to their prayer alone, apart from their use of the Scriptures, the Church, the Sacraments; not to their prayers as insulated beings, but as members of that one Christian body which is the body of Christ, and the abode of His Spirit. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit<sup>1</sup>.” In one word, the means of Truth, the means of Grace, the means of Salvation, are all indissolubly connected; all parts of one common and harmonious plan, by which salvation is to be wrought out, and the creature brought nigh to his Creator, the sinner to his Saviour, the rational and free but weak and corrupt being of this brief period of trial prepared for life eternal, through the mercy of Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

II. And thus has the consideration of this day, like every other portion of the present Inquiry, brought us home to the same practical conclusion—that *in order to the efficacious and salutary employment of the Principal Means of attaining Christian Truth*, we must not separate what God has joined, *we must employ them in harmonious combination.*

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii.

1. Was it an unnecessary labour thus to have endeavoured to develop so very simple and obvious a principle as the Duty of combining *all* our advantages in order to the attainment of Christian truth? But if few or none would deny the principle in the abstract, the practical neglect of it is the very characteristic of the great leading errors of different portions of the Christian community. It is not only the Enthusiast who employs one of the means of truth and casts away the rest, seeking the aid of the Spirit, but neglecting Reason, and the Church, and the Scriptures: the Romanist exaggerates the uses of the Church till he lays the Holy Scriptures practically in abeyance; large classes of Protestants, and individuals in all classes, pushing the principles of Protestantism to extravagance, exalt the Scriptures till they virtually forget the Church; the Rationalist begins with setting the Church aside, and ends with degrading Holy Scripture to the level of mere human compositions.

And so it is also with the various parts and details of several of these great means of Truth. Practical errors are for ever growing out of some partial, or exclusive, or exaggerated use of various portions of the whole system. Even the different parts of the Scriptures themselves are not exempt from this treatment; the Gospels are valued to the exclusion of the Epistles; or St.

Paul is extolled, St. James forgotten; or the New Testament alone is studied, the Old practically set aside. Or again, the entire volume of the Scriptures is studied, and studied with reverence and prayer, but yet without the due use of Reason and Judgment, studied as one work of one age with no discrimination made between the different Books and the different Dispensations to which they more especially belong. Or one abuse alone of Reason is avoided, others countenanced by those who would the most severely condemn the former. Or in our use of Church-privileges, the Modern Church alone is valued, or the Ancient alone, the Reformers, or the Fathers, or some one exclusive School of Theological writers; or human sums and systems and symbols are overvalued, or valued exclusively, to the practical depreciation of the Sacred Scriptures.

And are not these things, I do not say the causes, but among the causes, of Heresy, Dissent, and Schism, and Party-strife? And may we not entertain some hope of their alleviation by a more considerate use of all our privileges in their due connexion, under the gracious aid of the Spirit of God?

Therefore it is, that I have made a very humble but a very earnest and anxious endeavour to draw your attention not simply to the uses, but to the *connected uses*, of the four Principal Means of attaining Christian Truth—the Inspired Scrip-

tures ; the Church of Christ ; our own Natural powers ; and God's preventing and assisting Grace. To which end I have briefly touched to-day upon the great privilege of the Illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit in its necessary connexion with our study of the Scriptures, and the exercise of our Reason, and our use of all the Privileges of the Church, whether for instruction, or for edification, and the growth of those moral qualities which are essential to the attainment of moral and religious truth. With the same view, after some distinct notice of the more prominent Abuses of Reason, I formerly adverted also to the Use of our Reason and Judgment, not only with reference to the Evidences and the Books of Revelation, but also in connexion with some of those very aids and lights derived from the treasures of Christian Antiquity, which some would almost appear to value even to the abdication of our Reason. And with the same design, in the earlier portions of the Lecture, the connected uses of the Church and the Scriptures were opened more at large. The Structure of the New Testament and the Institution of the Christian Church were shewn to be in exact accordance ; and the character of the Old Scriptures to be in harmony with both ; from which an argument was derived, not to be lightly set aside by the devout student of the Inspired Volumes, to establish the very simple but very important



truth, that the teaching of the Christian Church is the appointed Introduction to the Christian Scriptures. The value of this principle was urged even when this Introductory teaching was regarded as without authority; yet the use likewise of the Presumptive authority of the Church was pointed out, with reference both to Christian Doctrines and Christian Institutions. Some attempt was also made to define the just limits of Church-Authority, and yet direct our thoughts and our gratitude to the true value of Church-Privileges: whilst to guard if possible against misapprehension, and prevent the waste of thought upon empty generalities, I have endeavoured to exemplify the proper combination of the uses of the Old Testament and the New, of the Church and the Scriptures, in the proof of some of the more prominent instances of controverted truths;—the Divine origin of the Lord's day, of Infant Baptism, and of Episcopacy; the doctrines of the Christian Atonement, the Divinity of our blessed Lord, and the Personality of the Holy Spirit, the main elements of that comprehensive principle of Christian faith, the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.

2. That I should have been enabled to escape all error on so many subjects is utterly beyond my hope; but neither is it necessary to the end in view. If your own inquiries have been upon

the whole directed aright, and some suggestions have been offered not without use at all times, and sufficiently adapted to existing circumstances, the end will have been sufficiently attained.

I frankly confess, indeed, that if I could imagine that the views which have been suggested would approve themselves at once to every mind, this I should regard, considering our innumerable divisions, as a sign of error rather than of truth. But it is more than probable, that as the different phases of erroneous opinion successively presented themselves to my mind, they will of themselves have prompted erroneous thought or unmeasured language in an opposite direction; and what was opposed at one time to dogmatism, at another to a spurious liberality, to the idolatry of Creeds, or the idolatry of Reason, to an unnatural independence, or a blind submission to Authority, to an excessive attachment to the Church, or an exclusive devotion to Holy Scripture, will not always have been restrained within the precise limits of truth and soberness. We live amidst false glares and reflected lights, and may easily mistake the genuine colours and true proportions of the objects around us. And besides, we have been travelling over an extensive country, and not a little tangled and intricate ground; and I have no pretensions to the learning and judgment which are really

required in order to weigh exactly the intrinsic value, and the relative value, of all the various aids to truth which have been considered or touched upon, directly or incidentally, with reference to the Church, ancient or modern, to Scripture or Tradition, Reason or Spiritual grace. Still I would fain hope that I shall not have led others into error, but rather that I have pointed out what we all should aim at. We may see our course. You can very readily perceive, that the Rationalist can go wrong by his Reason, and the Enthusiast by his private spirit, and the Ultra-protestant by the Scriptures; and so may we also, and this is the more likely danger in the seats of learning and in a well-ordered and Apostolical Church, by too exclusive or excessive a regard for learning, and theology, and the Fathers, and the Church itself. And others also, it is devoutly to be hoped, from observing our errors, may learn to suspect their own. And so may we all become more and more sensible of the danger of neglecting any one of the appointed means of truth, or of overvaluing any one of them, and feel the importance of endeavouring at least, according to our respective opportunities, to use *all* our advantages, and all, which is no light attempt, in harmonious combination, and with the due subordination of the less to the greater.

There is One indeed, whose infinite benevolence is continually occupied in drawing good out of evil; and so He bends the errors and mistakes and extravagances of individuals to His own gracious purposes, and the ultimate and general profit of His Church. And Truth is advanced upon the whole, whilst different Theologians, unconsciously pursuing each of them his own particular taste, turn aside here and there from the true path, one refining upon the spiritual interpretation of Scripture, another upon the Christian Sacraments; some dwelling too fondly upon Dogmatic, others upon Historical Christianity; some upon the Constitution of the Church and the dignity of the Ministerial Orders, others upon the practical Fruits of Grace without due reference to its appointed Means. Only let thoughts like these incline our hearts to Charity, but never tempt us to Indifference. Let them dispose us to cheerful and hopeful views even of this melancholy and distracted scene, and bid us gladly observe and select and use that degree of truth which is commonly the basis even of error, and the aim of those who walk in error; but still the more we witness the frailties and weaknesses of the heart and understanding, and the more we are moved by such reflections towards Charity and Christian Unity, so much the more closely let us

watch our own souls, and steadily pursue the Truth, and employ gratefully, yet discreetly, all the various Means by which it is to be attained.

Finally, if it shall be said by some that after all we have touched only upon the mere elements of Christian knowledge, how then shall we make progress in the Truth? or again, by others, that we have rather dwelt upon a store of learned labours, and how then, which was the very object of the Inquiry, shall a plain man be enabled by such means to ascertain the Truth?—let me endeavour to obviate both these conflicting objections, and so conclude.

For indeed I have spoken of learning only for the learned; for the Christian Pastor, for example, whose duty it is, and often his painful duty, to trace the mazes of error, and the sad history of successive errors, in order to their avoidance by himself and by his flock; or for those who have at once leisure for theological learning, and enjoy the requisite instruction and guidance in order to their pursuing it not unprofitably; or for those who are unhappily exposed to serious doubts respecting some important doctrine, and who are not entitled to speak and act as if they understood a subject upon which they have not brought to bear all those various resources which God has placed

within their power. And He who proportions our trials to our strength preserves, I doubt not, the simple and unlearned from those painful and distressing difficulties, which it may require the aid of Learning, under a far higher aid, to set us free.

The plain unlettered Christian, meanwhile, let me once more repeat, will attain to Christian truth, by a simpler process, indeed, and yet the same in kind. He need not be acquainted with the original languages of Holy Writ, or read a single Father, or even read at all. God has provided for him Ministers of the Word and Sacraments, and has addressed to him the glad tidings of Salvation intelligible in any language, and intelligible to the poor; nay, too frequently, through our waywardness, best understood by those who have the very least of those advantages of learning and wisdom so called which we perversely turn to our disadvantage, even until the things of God are “hid from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto babes<sup>m</sup>.” And yet his path to truth is still the same, and it is that which has been here displayed. He listens to the Church, but obeys the Scriptures; yet will he not obey the Scriptures without listening to the Church; nor yet without the diligent use of his own Understanding, still less without the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit,

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xi. 25.

nor without holiness, and docility, and love of truth, and of goodness, and therefore not without Prayer and the Sacraments and all our other blessed Means of faith and holiness.

And the Progress also of the learned and the unlearned in Christian Truth will be the same in kind, and will be furthered by the same means.

If they were elementary Christian truths to which I have adverted by way of example in these Discourses, yet they were also among the most important of all truths. They are among the principles, moreover, by which we are separated from our brethren, and the most widely separated, from the Romanist, for example, and the Protestant Dissenter, from the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Socinian, and Unitarian.

The very sum and substance of Christian doctrine is made up of these and but a few other kindred truths; such truths as answer to the great practical questions, What are we? and Whither are we going? How shall we serve and worship God? How be reconciled to Him? How enabled to continue in His favour? How attain to Life Eternal? The unlearned and the learned are equally interested in the answers to these questions, and equally capable of apprehending them. And to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,"

" 2 Pet. iii. 18. i. 5—11. Eph. iv. 15. Phil. iii. 12—14.

which is open alike to learned and unlearned, is all that really deserves the name of Progress—not indeed in Theological learning, but in Christian Truth.

I would not derogate from the just praise of Theological learning. When Theology holds her subordinate station, and serves as a handmaid to Scriptural truth, elucidating the sacred text, opening and enforcing its doctrines, disclosing the harmony of the divine Dispensations, she is to be highly esteemed. And to this very end have Teachers been appointed, and various talents entrusted to our use by Christ Himself, that we may minister to the edification of our brethren, and smooth their path to truth. Neither would I disparage the utility of exact statements, or elevate sentiment above doctrine. Without some statements of the truth we could not apprehend it ourselves, much less convey it to other minds. And without exact and cautious statements, seeing that all are not teachable and well disposed, nay rather that we are all disposed to evil, and prone to self-deceit, we may minister unconsciously to error or to sin: wherefore the negative as well as the positive uses of Theology are very great. And we must study the history of error, that we may check its growth or prevent its revival; and be acquainted with exact statements, as of the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, that we may repress the daring specu-



lations of heresy ; and with cautious statements, as of Justification or of the extent of human Corruption, lest we secretly favour licentiousness on the one hand, or pride on the other, and assist the self-deceit of the strong who would build upon their own merits and be saved without Christ, or of the weak who would be saved by Christ but without holiness.

Still the means may become insensibly confounded with the end ; and Theological truth, or what is supposed to be such, with the genuine Truth of Christianity. We may pass from exact definitions of Doctrine into Dogmatism, or from speculations upon the Sacraments into Mysticism, or mistake curious refinements, peremptory decisions, presumptuous and irreverent reasonings, for progress in the truth of Christ. That our “ Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,” that He “ did no sin,” but suffered for our sins, “ the just for the unjust,” these are Christian truths, if elementary yet most momentous ; but there is a Theology which dilates without authority upon the consequences of that mysterious union of the Divine and human natures, and analyzes the causes of that sinless perfection. That we are “ justified by faith” in Jesus Christ, and that He is “ the Lord

<sup>o</sup> Nicene Creed. John i. 14—19. Luke i. 26—35. 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22. iii. 18.

our righteousness<sup>p</sup>,” are all-important Christian truths; but that “our Saviour was obedient to the Law not only for our good but in our stead; that all His obedience to the Law is imputed to us, and our Justification consists not only in the remission of sins, but also in the imputation of Christ’s active righteousness,” these are the speculations of the Theologian<sup>q</sup>. That it was of “the eternal purpose of God which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” that we should be “chosen in Him before the foundation of the world,” is a Christian truth most gracious and most consolatory<sup>r</sup>; that in order to magnify the grace of God in our Election, we must also believe in the Decree of Reprobation, by which some were to be passed by, left in their sins, touched with no grace, condemned and punished eternally in order to set forth the Divine Justice, this is the peremptory decision of a presumptuous Theology<sup>s</sup>. That “all men shall rise again with their bodies and shall give account for their own works,” that “we shall all stand before the judgment-

<sup>p</sup> Art. xi. Rom. iii. 21—28. viii. 33. x. 3—10. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

<sup>q</sup> French Protestant Synod, 1612. Synodes Nationaux &c. par Aymon, cited by Jortin, Remarks on Eccles. Hist. Preface, p. xv.

<sup>r</sup> Art. xvii. Rom. viii. 28—39. Eph. i. 3—12. iii. 10, 11.  
<sup>s</sup> Tim. i. 9, 10.

<sup>t</sup> Synod of Dort, Art. xv. Sylloge Confessionum, p. 375.

seat of Christ," that "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him—and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord<sup>†</sup>:" these are the simple but amazing truths of the Gospel; but Theologians, passing above and beyond them, have determined that "the souls of men after death (which neither die nor sleep) immediately return to God who gave them; that the souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day<sup>u</sup>."

There are Theological conclusions then which are not Christian verities, and a progress in Theology, real or supposed, which is no progress towards the perfection of Christian knowledge. And what has been here advanced was not designed to assist your progress in Theology properly so called, except, perhaps, by here and there an occasional suggestion; whilst with that supposed Theology, which is but a vain exercise of the human understanding grasping at things

<sup>†</sup> Athanasian Creed. Rom. xiv. 10. 1 Thess. iv. 14—18.

<sup>u</sup> Westminster Confession of Faith, chap. xxxii.

above its reach, we have no concern except to restrain it. Nay, Christian truth itself has suffered so much from its very contact with speculative controversies and this spurious Theology, that our great problem often is to restore it to its proper simplicity. But in order to our progress in genuine Christian truth, the self-same means will avail us most which also suffice for its attainment. That truth has Salvation for its end, and our progress towards perfection in the truth must be a progress at once, in grace and in knowledge. There is no study like the study of the Sacred Scriptures to promote this two-fold progress in knowledge and in holiness. So shall we “have more understanding than all our teachers, when thy testimonies, O Lord, are our meditation. We shall understand more than the ancients, if we keep thy precepts\*.” That very structure of the sacred Books, which presupposes another Introduction to the truth, makes them the very best of all our means in order to Progress in the truth. And the Canon of Scripture was providentially closed, not indeed until various errors and ignorances of great moment had appeared and had been corrected, but before verbal controversies began, and any specious Theology was known. Yet are the Scriptures so rich in various and copious treasures of heavenly truth, that they are not to be exhausted even by daily study

\* Ps. cxix. 99, 100. 2 Tim. iii. 14. 17.

throughout our threescore fleeting years. Only let them not be studied for purposes of vanity and display; nor let Christian truth be sought as a thing to be admired, or commented upon, as a thing external to ourselves, but, as indeed it is, as a subject in which we have each of us a deep, vital, personal interest, by which we must live, in which we must die, with which we hope to rise again. Let it be our prayer and our desire not only that God may “grant us in this world the knowledge of His truth,” but also “in the world to come life everlasting<sup>†</sup>.” Then will the Holy Spirit assuredly bless the study of those Scriptures which He has inspired, and every day will give us a more and more distinct apprehension of our own corrupt nature, more vivid and enlarged conceptions of the ways and providence, and promises, and grace of God, will confirm our faith, and strengthen our hopes, expand our charity, till we desire nothing so much as that we ourselves may live in Christian truth, and all mankind may unite in it, “that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen<sup>‡</sup>.”

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee, that thou wouldest

<sup>†</sup> Prayer of St. Chrysostom.

<sup>‡</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 7—11. Eph. i. 10—12.

be pleased to make thy saving health known unto all nations; and more especially that the Universal Church of Christ may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

## NOTES.

---

### SERMON I.

Page 3. line 21. *Harsh expressions from pious lips, &c.*] We shall do well to suspect, that the Odium Theologicum has not passed into a proverb without some fault on our part. The Ancients have sometimes set us a bad example. See e. g. Vincentius Lirinensis, *Commonitorium*, §. vi. “ Quis tam sacrilegus, qui Donatistas et cæteras pestes, quæ illius auctoritate concilii rebaptizare se jactitant, in sempiternum neget arsuros esse cum diabolo.” §. xiii. “ Hæc ergo Nestorius, Apollinaris, Photinus, adversus Catholicam fidem rabidi canes latrant: &c.” §. xxi. “ Et post hæc inveniuntur aliqui tantâ inveteratæ frontis duritiâ, tantâ impudentiæ incude, tanto adamante pertinaciæ, &c.” §. xxv. “ Lege Pauli Samosateni opuscula, Priscilliani, Eunomii, Joviniani, reliquarumque pestium; . . . . tanto magis cavendi et pertimescendi sunt, quanto occultius sub divinæ legis umbraculis latitant. Sciunt enim fœtores suos nulli fere cito esse placituros, si nudi et simplices exhalentur: atque idcirco eos cœlestis eloquii velut quodam aromate aspergunt, ut ille, qui humanum facile despiceret errorem, divina non facile contemnat oracula.” §. xxvi. “ Sicut tunc caput capiti, ita nunc quoque membra membris loquuntur,

membra scilicet diaboli membris Christi; perfidi fidelibus, sacrilegi religiosis, hæretici postremo Catholicis."

But the moderns have one new temptation at least from their writing anonymously in Reviews and Journals on religious subjects. Young Clergymen, perhaps, and persons aspiring to be Clergymen, it is to be feared, are often so employed, and may be easily tempted accordingly to mistake the most uncharitable expressions for wit and point. Yet the real sentiments of the writers, I hope, are such as I have described in the text. Take the following examples.

"These passages are valuable in many ways, . . . and for the effects they may have, as upon others, so especially upon some who, from very untoward circumstances of education, would be deserving of compassionate consideration. For as for those who talk about their conscience being wounded at not seeing a thing they are to believe in the Bible, they only mean their pride by their conscience, and are not worth considering." *British Critic*, No. LI. Art. on Ancient MSS. p. 85.

"In like manner some talk of the spirit of the Psalms not being Christian, which is very like the Marcionist notion just mentioned. Now where this amount of Marcionist spirit exists, it will of course have a tendency to exert itself in a similar way; it would like interpretations and readings which made Christianity a harmless inoffensive sort of religion, not at all intended to send fire and sword upon the earth. Owing to the same paltry views of religion, as is very obvious, men speak amiss of the Athanasian Creed and the Communion Service, or explain them away." *Ibid.* p. 79.



“They read the Psalms still, many of which, they complain, are unchristian in their tone and temper. They nevertheless palm them off on the vulgar as fit parts of Christian worship, much as the Papists do their idols. Both of them have a way of explaining their own systems to themselves, though both must allow that they are in a fair way to deceive common honest minds. We who do not think the spirit of the Old Testament contrary to the New, can use the Psalms alluded to in the plain sense which plain men would naturally give them.” Ibid. p. 84.

These sentences, it may be observed, are not written against either Dissenters, or Foreign Churches, but against members and Ministers of the same Church with the writer, who believe in the Athanasian Creed as entirely as himself, although they may not think it the best for public worship, and may not approve of the general, unlimited, unexplained clauses of condemnation attached to it; and again, who equally with the writer venerate the Old Testament, and conceive the Psalms to have been wonderfully and providentially adapted to Christian uses, although they may not consider that all the successive dispensations of Religion, though not contrary one to another, are the same, or that even the Psalmists may not sometimes have been permitted in some of their expressions as well as their actions (Matt. xix. 8.) to fall below the Christian standard of holiness and charity.

Of Dissenters, without distinction, it is doubted whether they are members of the Church at all; “Dissenters were the chief defenders of its omission [the text concerning the Heavenly Witnesses] in this country, who (to speak with fear) if aliens from the

Church, may be therefore wanting in those gifts of discernment which belong to the members of it." Ibid. p. 87.

Again, but it is not clear to whom in particular the writer alludes, "Men cannot be wide awake who talk in the way they do against the Fathers and Tradition. They really are fairly getting themselves round into the second childhood of infidelity, and they ought to be told so in severe, plain-spoken language." Ibid. p. 98.

The Reviewer would no doubt write more cautiously and charitably if he wrote in his own name and at greater leisure. And our Dissenting Brethren will believe, I trust, that the spirit of the Church of England is of another kind, and not unlike what it is said to be by Bishop Van Mildert, Bampton Lecture VIII. p. 238 et seq. "But notwithstanding this care to avoid Error on her own part, and to discountenance it in others, no uncharitable invectives, no bitter anathemas, are fulminated against those who separate from her Communion: nor is any unwillingness manifested to give the right hand of fellowship to any other Churches with whom it is possible to hold lawful communion.—Great too have been her concessions towards those who have stirred up dissensions among her members: concessions, not made for the sake of popularity, or to enlarge her pale for the admission of them who are unsound in the Faith, but that Separatists might hereby be rendered more willing to listen to her instructions upon essential points, and to examine with candour the lesser matters on which such differences existed. Utterly disclaiming, therefore, the notion, that 'every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth,' she never-

theless shews a disposition to approximate, as nearly as truth and sincerity will allow, to tenets not entirely accordant with her own.—She is Catholic in her actual communion with every pure and genuine branch of the Christian Church, and in her desire to extend that union wherever it can be done without a violation of essential principles. She is Catholic in the soundness of her Creed, and in the care she has taken to restore, and to preserve uncorrupted, ‘the Faith once delivered to the Saints.’ She is Catholic also in the real liberality of her sentiments towards those who refuse to unite with her; a liberality shewing itself, not in affected indifference to the truths she has espoused, nor in an unworthy suppression of her own belief; but in disclaiming any external coercion to compel assent, and in forbearing harsh or offensive conduct towards the members of other Churches, or of other Congregations, at variance with herself.”

P. 4. l. 3. *Errors, schisms, heresies ascribed, &c.*] “No error can be supposed to issue from Divine wisdom, or to be the object of Divine approbation. Its source must be sought elsewhere; since the very term error denotes a deviation from some line of rectitude: and what but rectitude can proceed from Him who is the acknowledged Fountain of perfection?”

Searching the Scriptures for an elucidation of this subject, we there find not only unbelief, but heresy and schism also, ascribed partly to human perverseness, and partly to the influence of a spiritual adversary operating upon fallen man’s predisposition to evil. This indeed is the solution there offered to us of moral evil in general, as well as of that particular species of it which leads men to ‘make shipwreck of their faith.’ The parables of the sower and of the tares place the

subject in this point of view: and various Apostolical admonitions concur in representing that the will of man, whether yielding to its own inward propensities, or to some evil suggestions from without, is deeply concerned in every departure from the truth.

Conformably with this representation our Lord frequently charges the Jews with wilfulness and obstinacy in rejecting his doctrine. He addresses them as persons possessing the means of reasonable conviction, but not disposed to use them aright. He says of them that they had ‘no cloke for their sin’ in this respect; (John xv. 22.) that they ‘would not come to Him that they might have life;’ (John v. 40.) and that they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.’ (John iii. 19.) In the words of the text (‘if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God’) he virtually conveys a similar reproof; intimating that their ignorance of the justness of his pretensions (if ignorance it might be called) proceeded from an indisposition to do the will of God.” Bp. Van Mildert, Bampton Lecture II. p. 24, 25.

P. 6. l. 22. *the flippanc unbeliever—shallow journalist*, &c.] Voltaire, “Le Philosophe Ignorant.” Christian Teacher, Oct. 1835. p. 625. (cited in the British Critic. No. LI. p. 60.) Locke, “Reasonableness of Christianity.” Dr. Channing (Letter on Catholicism &c. p. 13.) contends for the great advantage resulting from *differences* in the creeds of Protestant communions, as a bulwark, namely, against Popery; which, however, is to admit that some errors at least are of importance; or why resist them? Elsewhere he writes as if no Christians had yet attained to any substantial truth, but we were merely in a state of progress towards it. This is the dream of an ardent but somewhat superficial mind, not likely, perhaps, to

deceive many. There may indeed be progressive advancement in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and, generally, in Theology as distinguished from elementary Religious truth; but it is idle to regard our Lord as a divinely-commissioned Teacher of the truth, and to suppose that He taught no substantial truths which his disciples should apprehend within 2000 years.

P. 8. l. 24. *In Abyssinia, nothing so common as to dispute, &c.*] See Journal of a Three Years' residence in Abyssinia, by the Rev. Samuel Gobat, (1834.) p. 190, 191.

“ On returning I found two Alacas and some priests at my house. They questioned me on the doctrine of the anointing of Jesus Christ, and on the two natures.— All this afternoon I had my house full of people, Alacas, priests, and laymen. They also put questions to me on the anointing of Jesus Christ, and on the two natures. I began by reproving them for always dwelling on the same topic, as if the Bible contained nothing else; and I added, that their continual disputes on the non-essential points prove their want of true Christianity; because the mark of Christianity is love; and that if they had Christian love, their disputes would be finished in a day.”

Ibid. p. 196. “ They were hardly departed, when the priests of Coscouam came with a party of young people. They had asked the Etchegua for a copy of the Gospel; and he sent them to me to ask my permission. They put several questions to me on the anointing of Jesus Christ, and the two natures: then they began to dispute together on useless points; for example, Did Adam rule over the Angels? Is it as man, by gift conferred on Him, that Jesus Christ rules over the Angels, or is it as God? &c. Not being able to agree, they wished

to constitute me their judge; but I confined myself to telling them, that these are vain questions, which St. Paul desires the priests and other Christians to avoid."

Ibid. p. 249. "I found means to avoid, or to cut short, the perpetual discussions on the two or three births of Jesus Christ, by constantly asking them to address themselves to this question, 'What is a birth?' They commonly remain mute; but when I press them, they all say, 'We do not know.' I then say to them, 'Thus you see that for more than three centuries you have been disputing on a word, which is, to you, without meaning.'"

Ibid. p. 342, 343. "The Christians of Abyssinia are at present divided into three parties; so inimical to each other, that they curse one another, and will no longer partake of the Sacrament together. It is one single point of theology that disunites them; but I have so much enlarged upon it in my journal, that I need only mention it here; it is the unceasing dispute concerning the unction of Jesus Christ. One party is of opinion, that when it is said that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, it is meant that the Godhead was united with the human nature of Jesus Christ; and that in all the passages of the Bible where the Holy Spirit is represented as having been given to Jesus Christ, the name Holy Spirit only signifies the Divinity of Christ, who had no need of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, whom He could not receive, having always possessed Him.

"Their manner of expressing themselves is, that Jesus Christ *has* anointed; that He *has been* anointed; and that He Himself *is* the unction. This party is chiefly in Tigré—the most exasperated one. This doctrine was that of the last Abuna.—The second opinion is, that when it is

said that Jesus Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit, it is signified merely that the Holy Spirit accomplished the union of the Godhead with the human nature in the person of Christ. This party is principally to be found in the provinces of Godjam and Lasta.—The third opinion predominating in all the other Provinces of Abyssinia, even in Shoa, is, that Jesus Christ, as man, although united to the Godhead from the moment of His conception, received the Holy Ghost in the human part of His nature, in the same manner as we receive Him; viz. as a gift of the Father; in order that He might be enabled to accomplish, as man, the work of our redemption: whence they conclude, that, because Jesus Christ received the Holy Spirit as we receive Him, His unction is to be called a third birth. These are the most tolerant. I have understood, that after my departure from Gondar, some of the most learned men left off calling the unction of Jesus Christ a birth. It appears that these differences of opinion are founded upon the different views they have adopted of the two natures of Jesus Christ; although, according to the letter, they are all Monophysites." See also *ibid.* p. 101, 102. 132, 133. 220—227. 242. 249. 254.

P. 9. l. 15. *investing his own speculations with the sacredness of the divine subject, &c.*] Borrowed from Dr. Hampden, but I forget from what place in his writings. It is a caution which no Theologian should lose sight of.

The passage alluded to in Stapfer occurs in his reply to objections taken against the want of system in the New Testament, Tertio, non inficiamur doctrinam Christianam tunc temporis nondum in artem fuisse redactam, uti hodie; neque tot tricis ac inutilibus questionibus ac distinctionibus fuisse refertam. Inveni in

Theologi cujusdam celeberrimi Systemate ultra nonaginta solum de Christi persona distinctiones: at Christus et Apostoli modo simplicissimo, omni humanæ scientiæ apparatu vacuo, totam illam disciplinam tradiderunt. *Stapferi Inst. Theol. Polem.* tom. ii. p. 1174. cited by Bishop Van Mildert, Notes on Bampton Lecture V. p. 304.

P. 19. l. 14. *Well nigh degrading Christianity into Heathenism, &c.*] “In the sound and solid view of theological controversies, the first object of all controversy is the doctrine of the Trinity. This concerns the very foundation-stone of our Religion. This affects the very pillar and ground of the truth. If this doctrine be *false*, then nine tenths of the Christians through every age and in every country have been guilty of *idolatry*; of an idolatry indeed, not so gross as that of the Heathens, because not the worship of *devils* in the place of God; yet of an idolatry more gross than that of the Papists at present, because not merely the worship of *saints* and of *angels*, in *subordination* to God; but the worship of a creature along *with* the Creator, placing him *equally* with God upon the throne of the universe, giving God a partner in his empire, and so deposing God from half his sovereignty. And if the doctrine be *true*, then the opposers of it are bold and blasphemous abusers of the faith; are like the giants of old brandishing their arms directly against heaven; and are vainly endeavouring to tear down our blessed Redeemer from the throne of the Godhead there.” Whitaker, *Origin of Arianism*, pp. 4, 5. cited by Bp. Van Mildert, Bampton Lecture, Notes, p. 311.

P. 19. l. 25. *Fundamental truths, fundamental errors, &c.*] See Van Mildert’s Bampton Lecture V. p. 117—127. and several useful notes on the same subject,



p. 304—313, with references to various writers, p. 307. But see particularly Dr. Waterland's Discourse of Fundamentals, Works, vol. viii. Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity, Works, vol. v.

It must of course have often occurred, that those who have denied what we regard as amongst the most important Christian verities, have fully admitted their importance. Dr. Priestley, e. g. acknowledges, that "if the Doctrine of the Trinity be true, it is no doubt in the highest degree important and interesting." (See Horsley's Tracts, p. 306. cited by Bp. Van Mildert, as above.) No really thoughtful person can do less. But it is not difficult to allow the mind to glance over subjects of the deepest interest, and never pause to consider them seriously.

P. 20. l. 21. *No perfection of Philosophy.*] I except of course incautious language, which may have been sometimes used without any sceptical meaning. Thus the summary of the Helvetic Confession (Sylloge Confessionum, p. 105.) speaks of the Canonical Scripture as "omnium perfectissima et antiquissima Philosophia," but still not intending to derogate from its Divine original, calling it "Verbum Dei, Spiritu S. tradita."

P. 23. l. 13. *The Interpreters are not the Authors, &c.*] See Bp. Van Mildert's Bampton Lecture III. p. 57. and IV. p. 94—101. and notes, p. 293—296.

P. 24. l. 3. *Speak of many others as inspired.*] Compare Rev. W. D. Conybeare's Bampton Lecture IV. p. 211—215. on the very similar language of Clement of Alexandria.

P. 24. l. 24. *Pretensions and an authority exclusively their own.*] "The Bible has pretensions exclusively its own. In his interpretation of it, the critic must ever

bear in mind, that it is the work of Sacred Penmen, not of unassisted human powers. Therefore, not only an ordinary solicitude to avoid error, but also a readiness to submit, where the subject requires it, the understanding and the affections to what is propounded on such authority, becomes the duty of the theological student; a duty, never to be unconditionally exacted, where the composition is merely human; never to be on any pretence dispensed with, where it is confessedly Divine." Bp. Van Mildert, Bampton Lecture II. p. 33. I have copied the spirit of this passage; but the writer, usually most cautious and exact, by his use of the words "unassisted human powers," "composition merely human," as if none but the sacred writings were ever superintended in any degree by Divine assistance, gives a handle to the incautious language just before alluded to, of an opposite kind, of those who delight to dwell upon the spiritual aid which may have been afforded to writers who were not, in the strict sense of the expression, *Inspired writers*.

P. 27. l. 14. *Certum est, in manu Ecclesiæ, &c.*] See De Moor in Marckii Compend. cited by Bp. Van Mildert, note on Bampton Lectures, p. 306.

P. 38. l. 8. *The almost universal acknowledgment of the authenticity of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.*] The very terms of our 6th Article, it has been well observed, indicate in a remarkable manner the general consent of Christian Churches upon this most important subject. "In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.—All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical."

P. 29. l. 22. *Scripture and Tradition the joint Rule of Faith.*] See further on this subject Sermon VI. and the note on p. 206. l. 24.

P. 31. l. 6. *Believe that they can establish every Article in the three Creeds by the Scriptures alone.*] See this well put, with respect to Protestants, by Rev. W. D. Conybeare, Bampton Lecture I. p. 28—30. But Romanist writers admit the sufficiency of Scripture for the proof at least of all the Articles in the three Creeds. See Abp. Tillotson, Rule of Faith, Part I. Sect. III. §. 2. Works, vol. x. p. 239. (1820.) And to the same purpose a very learned and exact Romanist writer of the 17th century, citing several authorities of his Church. “As for the *sufficiency* or *intirenesse* of the Scriptures, for the containing all those points of faith, that are simply necessary of all persons to be believed for attaining salvation, Roman Catholics deny it not; but only deny such a *clearness* of Scripture, in some of those, as Christians cannot mistake or pervert. Catholics contend indeed, that there are several things necessary to be believed by Christians, according as the Church, out of Apostolical Tradition, hath or shall declare and propose them, (as, touching the *Government* of the Church; several *Functions* of the *Clergy*; *Administration* of the *Sacraments*, and some other sacred *Ceremonies*; and particularly concerning the *Canon* of the *Scriptures*,) which are not contained in the Scriptures, at least, as to the clear mention therein of those appertinents, which yet have been ever observed in the Church. But though (I say) Catholics maintain several credends, that are not expressed in Scriptures, necessary to be believed, and observed by Christians, after the Churches *Proposal* of them, as *Tradition Apostolical*, amongst which is the *Canon of Scripture*; yet they willingly concede, that all such

points of faith as are simply necessary for attaining salvation, and as ought explicitly *by all men* to be known in order thereto, either *ratione medii*, or *præcepti* (as the Doctrines collected in the *three Creeds*; the *common* precepts of *manners*, and of the more necessary *Sacraments*, &c.) are contained in the Scriptures; *contained therein*, either in the *Conclusion* itself; or in the *principles* from whence it is necessarily deduced. [See *Bellarmino de verbo Dei non Scripto*, l. 4. cap. 11.—*Illa omnia scripta sunt ab Apostolis, quæ sunt omnibus simpliciter necessaria ad salutem*. Stapleton *Relect. Princip. Doctrinæ fidei Controver.* 5. q. 5. art.—*Doctrinam fidei ab omnibus et singulis explicite credendum omnem aut fere omnem, scripto commendarunt Apostoli*.—The main and substantial points of our faith (saith F. Fisher in Bishop White, p. 12.) are believed to be Apostolical, because they are written in Scripture. *S. Thom.* 22. q. art. 9. ad primum, art. 10. ad primum.—*In Doctrina Christi et Apostolorum* [he means *scripta*] *veritas fidei est sufficienter explicata; sed, quia perversi homines Scripturas pervertunt, ideo necessaria fuit temporibus procedentibus explicatio fidei contra insurgentes errores*. And *ib.* q. 5. et 13. *Omnibus Articulis fidei inhæret Fides propter unum medium, sci. propter veritatem primam propositam nobis in Scripturis, secundum doctrinam Ecclesiæ, sane intelligendis*. See several authorities to this purpose collected by *Fr. a S. Clara in System. Fidei*, c. 7.] Therefore the Church from time to time defining any thing concerning such points, defines it out of the *Revelations* made in Scripture. And the chief *Tradition*, the necessity and benefit of which is pretended by the Church, is not the *delivering* of any *additional* doctrines, descended from the Apostles' times *extra Scripturas*, i. e. such doctrines as have not their foundations at least in Scripture; but is the *preserving*, and delivering of the

*primitive* sense, and Church-explication of that which is written in the Scriptures, but many times not there written so clearly, (which traditive sense of the Church you may find made use of against *Arianisme* in the first Council of Nice.)—Or as Dr. Field. *This Tradition is that form of Christian doctrine and explication of the several parts thereof, which the first Christians, receiving of the same Apostles that delivered to them the Scriptures, commended to posterity.* Thus he. This then being the Tradition that is chiefly vindicated by the Roman Church, it is not the *deficiency of Scripture*, as to all the main, and prime, and universally necessary-to-be-known, Articles of Faith, (as if there were any necessity, that these be supplied, and completed with other not written traditional Doctrines of Faith,) that Catholics do question: but such a *non-clearness of Scriptures*, (for several of these points,) as that they may be mis-understood, (which non-clearness of them infers a necessity of making use of the Church's Tradition for a true exposition and sense,) is the thing that they assert: and wonder, that, after the appearance of so many grievous heresies, any should deny. For as to the Scriptures containing all the *chief* and *material* points of a Christian's belief; what article of Faith is there, except that concerning the *Canon of Scripture*, (which Protestants also grant cannot be learnt out of Scripture;) and excepting those *Practical* wherein, the Church only requiring a Belief of the lawfulness of them, it is enough, if they cannot be shewed to be against Scripture; I say what *Speculative* article of Faith is there, for which Catholics rest merely on *unwritten Traditions*; and do not, for it, allege Scripture; I mean, even that Canon of Scripture, which Protestants allow?

“ (A thing observed also by *Dr. Field*, but too much

extended,—*This is so clear (saith he), that there is no matter of Faith [it is granted, no principal point thereof] delivered by bare and only Tradition; that, therein, the Romanists contrary themselves, endeavouring to prove by Scripture the same things they pretend to hold by Tradition; as we shall find if we run through the things questioned between them and us, [they contrary not themselves in their holding several things to be delivered clearly by Tradition, which are also obscurely, or more evadably, contained in the words of Scripture. Again—So that for matters of Faith (saith he) we may conclude according to the judgment of the best, and most learned, of our adversaries themselves; that there is nothing to be believed, which is not either expressly contained in Scripture, or at least by necessary consequence, from thence, and by other things evident in the light of nature, or in the matter of fact, to be concluded. Thus he.]*

“I say then; not this, whether the main, or if you will, the entire, body of the Christian Faith, as to all points necessary by all to be explicitly believed, be contained there; but this, whether so clearly, that the unlearned, using a right diligence, cannot therein mistake, or do not need therein another Guide, is the thing here contested.” Rational account of Doctrine of the Roman Catholics concerning the Ecclesiastical Guide in Controversies of Religion. By R. H. 2d Ed. 1673. Disc. 2. chap. v. §. 40. p. 136—139.

## SERMON II.

Page 40. l. 4. *The Historical Books according to the well-known accounts, &c.]* Thus Mr. Conybeare, for example, writing with a very different purpose, states the facts in the same way. “The account which one of the Evangelists has himself given us of his motives in

composing his written Gospel, and which may well serve for all, sufficiently attests his conviction of the necessity even at this early period of embodying the substance of the previous catechetical instruction in a *written* record, as the only effectual means by which they could be transmitted and preserved with the certainty of truth; *ἵνα ἐπιγνώσῃ περὶ ὧν κατηχήθη; λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν.*

“In every other case the very same anxiety dictated the original composition of the Gospels. Thus when St. Matthew (see Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. ii.) was about to withdraw from his ministry among the Hebrews, he left with them his Gospel, (originally published in their own language,) in order to supply by a written document the loss of his own personal instructions; a labour surely *superfluous*, if he could have trusted to tradition.

“Thus also St. Mark (generally called by ecclesiastical antiquity the interpreter of St. Peter) is said to have composed his Gospel at Rome, in consequence of the earnest request of those who had there heard the preaching of his Apostolic companion, that he would leave with them a *memorial in writing* of the truths which had been so delivered.

“And last of all, the aged survivor of the whole Apostolical band, St. John, lest any thing essential should remain uncertified to future ages by a sure record, composed his own Gospel, with the obvious design of completing the evangelical series, by a document strictly supplemental to all those which preceded it.” Bampton Lecture (1839), p. 19, 20.

P. 42. l. 3. *No record of any divine appointment under which any one of the books of the New Testament was compared.]* This fact is much dwelt upon by Mr. Parkinson, in the Second of his Hulsean Lectures for the year 1838, p. 31 et seq. He has some other ob-

servations to the same effect with mine in this Discourse, and they are independent judgments, my Sermon having been written before I became acquainted with his Lectures.

P. 47. l. 9. *Stillingfleet, &c.* and note.] But if we examine the instances which Stillingfleet adduces, they prove nothing at all as to the clearness of Scripture in the inculcation of Christian *doctrines*. The passage is as follows; “As the matters themselves are of an excellent nature, so is the manner wherein they are revealed in the Scriptures, and that, 1. *In a clear and perspicuous manner*; not but there may be still some passages which are hard to be understood, as being either prophetical, or consisting of ambiguous phrases, or containing matters above our comprehension; but, all those things which concern the terms of Man’s Salvation are delivered with the greatest evidence and perspicuity. Who cannot understand what these things mean, *What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* that *without Faith it is impossible to please God*; that *without Holiness none shall see the Lord*; that *unless we be born again, we can never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven?* These and such like things are so plain and clear, that it is nothing but men’s shutting their eyes against the Light can keep them from understanding them: &c.” Yet, as was said, only the last of these texts relates to an express Doctrine, and that a doctrine which, so far from being clearly expressed and determined in these words, has proved a most fertile field of debate and controversy. See also several strong passages, ancient and modern, respecting the clearness of Scripture, at least in all necessary matters, in Laud’s Controversy with Fisher, §. 26. p. 196—198. But all these passages should really



be interpreted with the proviso that there was a *Church* existing by which the sense of the Scriptures was taught. Abp. Laud, of course, and Abp. Tillotson did not intend to exclude the use of the Christian Church. Neither did Chillingworth, though his authority is so often quoted as if he forgot the Church in extolling the Scriptures. Thus chap. ii. §. 87. "That the true interpretation of the Scripture is to be received from the Church, you need not prove; for it is very easily granted by them who profess themselves very ready to receive all truths, much more the true sense of Scripture not only from the Church, but from any society of men, nay, from any man whatsoever." And more definitely, chap. i. §. 7. "In your graduation I shall rise so far with you as to grant, *That Christ founded a visible Church, stored with all helps necessary to Salvation, particularly with sufficient means to beget and conserve Faith, to maintain Unity, and compose Schisms, to discover and condemn Heresies, and to determine all controversies in Religion*, which were necessary to be determined. For all these purposes, he gave at the beginning *Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Doctors*; who by word of mouth taught their contemporaries, and by writings taught their Christian Posterity to the world's end, how all these ends, and that which is the end of all these ends, Salvation, is to be achieved. And these means the Providence of God hath still preserved, and so preserved, that they are sufficient for all these intents."

P. 55. l. 2. *What the voice of Reason and of the Moral Sense is to the Precepts, &c.*] See remarks on this subject in Abp. Whately's notes on Abp. King's Discourse on Predestination, p. 119—126.

P. 59. l. 3 *Repugnant to the wisdom, &c. and note.*]

It should, however, be observed, that Bp. Stillingfleet only writes upon the hypothesis that God has given a written Revelation, and that he disclaims the idea of arguing *à priori* to the mode of His Revelation. Moreover, as was observed in a former note, he in reality supposes the existence of the Church, and its proper office in connexion with the Scriptures, but denies the Infallibility attributed to the Church by his Romanist opponents.

The whole Principle is as follows; “13. Although we cannot argue against any particular way of Revelation, from the necessary attributes of God; yet such a way as writing being made choice of by Him, we may justly say, that it is repugnant to the nature of the Design, and the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to give infallible assurance to persons in writing His will, for the benefit of mankind, if those writings may not be understood by all persons, who sincerely endeavour to know the meaning of them, in all such things as are necessary for their salvation.” Works, vol. v. p. 216.

P. 60. l. 10. *Any defect in the Volume of the New Testament.*] Dr. Miller of Dublin, in his *Strictures on my Dissertation upon Unauthoritative Tradition*, annexed to his *Plea of Tradition* (1826), seems to have supposed that I had treated the Indirectness of the Christian Scriptures as a Defect. I had however spoken of it, though briefly, as an advantage and an excellence. The advantages arising from the omission of Creeds, &c. in the New Testament were afterwards more fully considered by my friend Abp. Whately, in *Essay VI. on some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion*. (Third Edit. 1831.)

Mr. Woodgate also, in his *Bampton Lecture*, 1839, has pointed out the adaptation of the actual structure of

the New Testament, taken in connexion with the teaching of the Church, to the moral constitution of man. There are several things indeed in this second Sermon which may be supposed to be borrowed without acknowledgment from his Lectures; they will however be found, I believe, to have been previously expressed in the Dissertation above mentioned, or in a Sermon in continuation of the same subject which I printed in 1830, entitled, "Christianity not the Religion either of the Bible only or of the Church."

P. 65. Note.] "Revelation we must remember is not our earliest teacher. Man is not born with the single power of reading God's word, and sent immediately to that guide. His eyes open first on another volume, that of the creation. Long before he can read the Bible he looks round on the earth and sky. He reads the countenances of his friends, and hears and understands their voices. He looks, too, by degrees within himself, and acquires some ideas of his own soul. Thus his first school is that of nature and reason, and this is necessary to prepare him for a communication from Heaven. ~ Revelation does not find the mind a blank, a void, prepared to receive unresistingly whatever may be offered; but finds it in possession of various knowledge from nature and experience, and still more in possession of great principles, fundamental truths, moral ideas, which are derived from itself, and which are the germs of all its future improvement. This last view is peculiarly important. The mind does not receive every thing from abroad. Its great ideas arise from itself, and by these native lights it reads and comprehends the volumes of nature and revelation. We speak indeed of nature and revelation as making known to us an intelligent first cause, but the ideas of intelligence and causation we

derive originally from our own nature. The elements of the idea of God we gather from ourselves. Power, wisdom, virtue, beauty, and happiness, words which contain all that is glorious in the universe and interesting in our existence, express attributes of the mind, and are understood by us only through consciousness. It is true, these ideas or principles of reason are often obscured by thick clouds, and mingled with many and deplorable errors. Still they are never lost. Christianity recognizes them, is built on them, and needs them as its interpreters. If an illustration of these views be required, I would point you to what may be called the most fundamental idea of religion. I mean the idea of right, or duty. Do we derive this originally and wholly from sacred books? Has not every human being, whether born within or beyond the bounds of revelation, a sense of the distinction between right and wrong? Is there not an earlier voice than revelation, approving or rebuking men according to their deeds? In barbarous ages is not conscience heard? And does it not grow more articulate with the progress of society? Christianity does not create, but presupposes the idea of duty; and the same may be said of other great convictions. Revelation then does not stand alone, nor is it addressed to a blank and passive mind. It was meant to be a joint work with other teachers, with nature, with Providence, with conscience, with our rational powers; and as these all are given us by God, they cannot differ from each other. God must agree with Himself. He has but one voice. It is man who speaks with jarring tongues. Nothing but harmony can come from the Creator; and accordingly a religion claiming to be from God can give no surer proof of falsehood, than by contradicting those previous truths which God is teaching by our very nature.

We have thus seen that reason prepares us for a Divine communication." Dr. Channing's Discourses, 1833, III. p. 120.

### SERMON III.

P. 73. l. 20. *Not for a moment left without hope, &c.*] "Had our first parents been left thus, they might have continued in their labour and sorrow for their appointed time, and at last returned to dust, without any well-grounded hope or confidence in God: they must have looked upon themselves as rejected by their Maker, delivered up to trouble and sorrow in this world, and as having no hope in any other. Upon this foot, I conceive there could have been no religion left in the world; for a sense of religion without hope is a state of phrenzy and distraction, void of all inducements to love and obedience, or any thing else that is praiseworthy. If therefore God intended to preserve them as objects of mercy, it was absolutely necessary to communicate so much hope to them, as might be a rational foundation for their future endeavours to reconcile themselves to Him by a better obedience. This seems to be the primary intention of this first Divine prophecy; and it was necessary to the state of the world, and the condition of religion, which could not possibly have been supported without the communication of such hopes. The prophecy is excellently adapted to this purpose, and manifestly conveyed such hopes to our first parents." Sherlock on Prophecy, Discourse III. p. 45.

"As to the persuasion which is so confidently indulged, that the *Object of Faith* has been in all ages *one* and the *same*, it is true in one sense, erroneous in another. One object of Faith has been always the same; that object, the Redeemer. The original promise, in Paradise,

created this prospect of Faith, to be the light and hope of the world for ever. But that original promise could not be interpreted by itself into the several parts of its appointed completion. The general prediction of the Redeeming Seed, ‘It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,’ though adequate in the mind of God to the determinate form of the Christian Redemption, could not be so deduced into his final sense by the mind of man. . . . It was the office of later Revelation to fill up the design of this Promise : and Revelation alone could do it. For the *deductions* of Supernatural Truth are not within the sphere of the human intellect. They are not to be inferred, as discoverable conclusions, from one primary principle. A Redeemer being foretold ; his Divine Nature, his Incarnation, the Vicarious nature of his Sufferings, his Death, and the Atoning Efficacy of it, all these, though real connexions of truth, comprehended, with the original promise, in the scheme of the Divine Economy, came down to man, like new streams of light, by their separate channels ; and when they are communicated in their proper form, then we know them ; not before.” Davison on Primitive Sacrifice, p. 151, 152.

P. 74. l. 5. *the earlier Scriptures supposed to preach the very truths of the Gospel.*] “To what extent this freedom, however, has been carried, in the interpolation of the Primitive Creed, cannot be unknown to those who are ever so moderately acquainted with the state of Theological opinion, either in our own times, or in those which have preceded. As an example of it in its more prominent form, I shall subjoin a passage from *Bochart*. The passage expresses at large what may be found diffused through many other authors. For the same notions are traditional, and derived into the writings of

a numerous class of divines; some of our own country and our own age. But I purposely select the example from the writings of a remote author, that the allegation of it may be the less liable to invidious reflexions: whilst that author himself is one, who, by his great erudition, piety, and high esteem in the Reformed Church, might give credit to error, if Truth were not above the authority of men's names and persons. 'In Abel,' says *Bochart*, 'every thing was different. For he *knew* that God had appointed these Sacrifices of lambs *for a figure of the Sacrifice* to be offered for us by *Christ*, in whom alone he had placed his whole hope of salvation and reliance. Therefore, in slaying the lamb, he *thought of the Lamb slain for us* before the foundations of the earth were laid. Pouring forth the blood of the Victim, he *had Christ in his mind*, who was afterwards to shed his blood for the remission of sin. In the fire sent down from heaven, as shall immediately be explained, by which that part of the victim was consumed which had been reserved for God, he beheld an image of the Divine wrath justly kindled against sinners, and *demanding* of right, the punishment due, *from Christ our Surety and Redeemer*. Finally *feeding* upon the remaining *flesh* of the same Victim, *by faith he embraced Christ*, whose flesh is meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed: so that whosoever eateth his flesh or drinketh his blood, hath eternal life.'

"Here is a person, a prodigy of learning, &c. who yet errs in judgment so far, as to offer to us for the Primeval Faith, what it cost the revelation of the last line of the Prophets, and the Advent of the Saviour Himself, to discover to the world." Davison, *Primitive Sacrifice*, p. 163—165. \*

"*Luther's* version of *Genesis* iv. 1. has contributed to diffuse in the Lutheran Church high notions of Early

Information on the Christian Subject—‘*Acquisivi hominem, qui Dominus est,*’ viz. according to his idea, ‘the *Man Jehovah.*’ There is no question, in the present day, but that this version is founded on an inaccurate knowledge of the original text. But the authority of this great Chief of the Reformation has given currency to the same opinions. Deylingius, a writer of the Lutheran Church, thus represents them in their fullest extent. ‘*Æque igitur illustris est confessio Evangelica Evæ, ac πληροφορία Thomæ Christum ex mortuis reditum amplectentis, et exclamantis: ‘Ο Κύριός μου καὶ ὁ Θεός μου.*’—Deyling. *Observ. Sacr.* tom. v. p. 302. But, in truth, the manifest mistake of Eve, if such had been her thought, might have hindered the supposition of such an extraordinary belief being present to her mind.” Ibid. p. 193.

P. 79. l. 21. *Christ, the one Priest and only Sacrifice under the new covenant.*] “*Jam vero quamvis S. Paulus tralatitio loquendi genere utens Sacerdotis personam sibi sumat, quamvis et Christiani omnes, ex sacris illis spiritualibus, quæ ipsi quotidie Deo offerunt, Sacerdotes nonnunquam appellantur, id tamen maxime advertendum, nullos Evangelii ministros, quocunque in ordine constituti fuerint, hujus ipsius muneris ratione usquam in scripturis sacris ἱερεῖς aut ἀρχιερεῖς vocari. Quod ideo moneo, ut ministerium Evangelicum a Sacerdotio Aaronico multum differre intelligatur; idque in eo præcipue cerni, quod illud pro Deo apud homines præcipue constitutum sit, hoc pro hominibus apud Deum. Ex quo et illud intelligitur, illud præcipue circa homines, hoc circa Deum versatum esse. Quibus adde, quod Sacerdotio Judaico successit Sacerdotium Christi, non ministerium Evangelicum. Ut nemo nunc nisi ipse Christus autoritate a Deo data ἱερεὺς, aut*



ἀρχιερεὺς supersit; nempe hominum apud Deum patronus." Outram. de Sacr. l. i. c. xix. §. 5.

Compare the following passage. " Nous vous conjurons avant tout M. T. C. F. de vous montrer constamment les dignes ministres et representans de Jesus Christ qui a daigné vous *associer à son auguste sacerdoce*, &c." Pastoral Instruction of the Archbishop of Rouen to his Clergy, 1825.

P. 81. l. 4. *The Law did not comprehend a future state of Retribution among its sanctions, &c.* and note p. 81.] This is a mere question of fact, and quite independent of another question often mixed up with it, whether the people of Israel believed in the doctrines of Eternal Life and a future Retributive state. No doubt they did so, or some of them at least did so; and their belief in these doctrines became clearer and stronger, as the Prophets gradually opened the subject more and more, and the time of Redemption came more near. Heb. xi. and compare 2 Mac. vii. Bp. Warburton, as Dr. Graves and others have shewn, argued illogically, and quite unnecessarily for his own purpose, that the people could not have the doctrine of a Future State, because Moses did not teach it. Nevertheless, notwithstanding occasional faults and inconsistencies, the Divine Legation is a most able, learned, and valuable work: and whereas Bp. Bull, Bp. Taylor, Episcopus, and others, had fully and explicitly admitted the fact, that the sanctions of the Mosaic Law were only temporal, Warburton first pointed out, that *the omission of the doctrine of a future state in the Law* viewed in combination with its *temporal sanctions*, became a *proof* of the Divine Legation of Moses instead of an *objection* to it; and that it exactly harmonized with the Christian doctrine, that Eternal Happiness is a "gift" solely dependent upon Justification through the Redeemer.

P. 86. l. 21. *Twenty-second Psalm described by Luther,* and note p. 87.] Bp. Horne describes Ps. xxii. as altogether spoken by our Lord Himself, “He complaineth of being forsaken, describeth his humiliation, &c.” Compare also the following passage from Luther’s larger Commentary on Ps. xxii. 17. “De sensu autem verborum nulla quæstio, cum toti orbi, etiam impiis sit notissimus. Videmus tamen hic spiritus Davidici incomparabilem gloriam qui Christi omnia Sacramenta adeo pernoverit, ut etiam crucifigendi modum præviderit. Nam in spiritualibus illis malis, et ipse non parum fuit eruditus et exercitatus, ut facile fuerit et Christum similia vel majora passurum prænosse. Sed fodi manus et pedes nunquam expertus fuerat, nec tale aliquid in alio quopiam viderat unquam, et tamen ita pronunciat, ut nullus alius Scripturæ locus æque clare tradiderit, ne Evangelia quidem cum toto Novo Testamento. Et quod magis miremur obscurissimus simul et clarissimus est, eisdem verbis. Nam antequam impleretur, quis per fassionem manuum et pedum et ossium dinumerationem intellexisset crucifixionem? cum tot modis possint fodi non crucifixo ullo; post impletionem vero, nihil aptius, nihil clarius dictum est, quam fodi manus et pedes, et numerari ossa, ut et Augustinus hic dicat, Non potuisse melius describi extensionem corporis in ligno.” Lutheri Opera, tom. iii. p. 341.

P. 89. l. 9. *most distinctly perceived to be Evangelical predictions, when they speak of the calling of the Gentiles, &c.*] That is to say, To Abraham in fact there were two distinct lines of promise; two covenants were made with him, one temporal and restricted to his natural descendants, his successors in the inheritance of the promised land; the other eternal and universal, conveying a blessing in his spiritual seed to “all the nations of the earth,” the inheritors through Christ of the heavenly Canaan.

(See Davison on Prophecy, Disc. III.) But hence the occasion of subsequent Prophecy, whenever it becomes *Evangelical*, rising above the fortunes of the natural descendants of Abraham, and the partial temporal covenant, and launching into the everlasting covenant which was also universal. Thus the *Universality* of the Gospel Covenant becomes one of the keys of an Evangelical prophecy. Other characteristics of the Gospel covenant, as "Peace," "Righteousness," are keys of the same kind.

P. 100. l. 2. *Terms not strictly figurative, but analogical.*] "There is great difference between the analogical representations of God, and that which we commonly call figurative. The common use of figures is to represent things that are otherwise very well known, in such a manner as may magnify or lessen, heighten or adorn, the ideas we have of them. And the design of putting them in this foreign dress, as we may call it, is to move our passions, and engage our fancies more effectually than the true and naked view of them is apt to do, or perhaps ought. And from hence it too often happens, that these figures are employed to deceive us, and make us think better or worse of things than they really deserve.

"But the analogies and similitudes that the Holy Scriptures or our own reason frame of divine things, are of another nature; the use of them is to give us some notion of things whereof we have no direct knowledge, and by that means lead us to perception of the nature, or at least of some of the properties and effects of what our understandings cannot directly reach; and in this case to teach us how we are to behave ourselves towards God, and what we are to do, in order to obtain a more perfect knowledge of His attributes.

“And whereas in ordinary *figurative* representations, the thing expressed by the figure, is commonly of much less moment than that to which it is compared; in these *analogies* the case is otherwise, and the things represented by them have *much more reality and perfection* in them, than the things by which we represent them.

“Thus, weighing a thing in our minds is a much more noble and perfect action than examining the gravity of a body by scale and balance, which is the original notion from whence it is borrowed; and reflection, as in our understandings, is much more considerable than the rebounding of one hard body from another, which yet is the literal sense of reflection.

“And after the same manner, what we call knowledge and foreknowledge in God, have infinitely more reality in them, and are of greater moment, than our understanding or prescience, from whence they are transferred to Him; and in truth these, as in man, are but faint communications of the Divine perfections, which are the true originals, and which our powers and faculties more imperfectly imitate, than a picture does a man: and yet, if we reason from them by *analogy and proportion*, they are sufficient to give us such a notion of God’s attributes, as will oblige us to fear, love, obey, and adore Him.

“If we lay these things together, they will furnish us with sufficient reasons to satisfy us why the holy Scriptures represent divine things to us by types and similitudes, by comparisons and analogies, since it appears that we are not capable of better; that such knowledge answers all the designs of religion; and that when the matter is duly examined, we hardly know any thing without ourselves in a more perfect manner.”

Archbishop King, Discourse on Predestination, §. 21.

§. 22. But Dr. King, as Archbishop Whately remarks,

did not always use the words “resemblance” and “analogy” with a sufficiently precise distinction of their respective senses. On this subject see Bp. Copleston’s note referred to p. 87. and for the application of the subject to the doctrine of the Atonement, see Mr. Veysie’s Bampton Lecture.

#### SERMON IV.

P. 120. l. 13. *Heresies of primitive times Trinitarian in their character, indicating the truth whilst they misconceived it.*] A remarkable attestation to the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, well commented upon by Dr. Hampden.

“There is another observation, which the present inquiry has suggested, and which I think of great importance, in order to a just view of the Trinitarian Controversies. Let it then be remarked, that all the theories proposed on the subject are Trinitarian *in principle*. If the opinions of Praxeas, and Artemon, and Theodotus, of Paul of Samosata, Noetus, Sabellius, and others, amounted to Unitarianism; it was in the way of *consequence*, or *inference*. They set out with a Trinitarian hypothesis, and either explained it away themselves by their speculations, or had the consequences of their theories forced on them by their adversaries, as the principles of their belief. We can plainly perceive, though unfortunately but very slight memorials remain to us of their disquisitions, that their anxiety was, to account for certain acknowledged facts of the Scripture narrative. They refer to admitted manifestations of God, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: and the desire of accommodation to Jewish or Heathen prejudices, the refutation of the theories of others, the fancies of private speculation,—these, and other in-

fluences concealed from our research,—suggest to the several inquirers peculiar combinations, or analyses, of the given facts, in their respective doctrines of the Trinity. Take the reverse of the case, and you will judge, what a difference would have been in the language of these theorists. We should have had no attempts to explain the Divine Unity consistently with Trinitarian distinctions. They would not have been employed in explaining away distinctions, which they did not admit in some sense at least. They would have simply explained, and enforced, the Unity which they did admit. Or, had they referred to Trinitarian distinctions as maintained by opponents in argument, they would have endeavoured to disprove them, instead of labouring, as they have done, to retain these very views, however imperfectly, erroneously, or vainly, in their own systems.” Bampton Lecture III. p. 148, 149.

P. 120. l. 25. *And this not as the belief of those individuals alone, but as professed by the Church, &c.*] That is to say, we see the faith of others also, by implication, as well as of the writers themselves, when we read testimonies borne to the Divinity of Messiah in published *Apologies*, as by Justin, Tertullian, &c. or in letters written to *Churches*, as those of Ignatius or Clement of Rome, or in published *Creeds*, or writings against *Heresies*. And thus the mere English reader may almost at a glance behold the faith of Primitive times, if he only consults such common works as Bingham’s *Antiquities*, or Dr. Burton’s *Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Divinity of Christ*; and compares the Nicene Creed in the book of Common Prayer with the ancient Formularies collected by Bingham, b. x. ch. iv. (as e. g. that from Irenæus, “The things which are manifestly handed down by the Apostolical preaching are these;

First, that there is one God, who created and made all things, &c. The next article is, that Jesus Christ, who came into the world, was begotten of the Father before every creature, who ministering to His Father in the creation of all things [*for by Him all things were made*], in the last times made Himself of no reputation, and became man; He who was God was made flesh, and when He was man, He continued the same God that He was before, &c.”) or with the testimonies, of the classes above mentioned, in Dr. Burton: as, e. g. from *Clement of Rome*, p. 6, 7. (Ed. 1826.) “*Clementis 1<sup>a</sup> Ep. c. 16. p. 156.* The following passage may remind us of St. Paul’s words in Phil. ii. 6, 7. ‘For Christ belongs to the humble-minded, who do not exalt themselves over his flock. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the sceptre of the majesty of God, did not come in the pomp of splendour or of pride, although he might have done so, but humble,’ &c. This passage strongly confirms the usual interpretation of Phil. ii. 7. that the first humiliation of Christ consisted in His divesting Himself of His divine nature and assuming the human. Clement expressly says, that Christ might have come in pomp and splendour, which power He could not have had, if He were a mere man, and had no existence prior to His human birth. Neither is it probable that Clement would have called a mere man *the sceptre of the majesty of God*.

“The passage may remind us of similar expressions in the Fathers: e. g. Justin Martyr: ‘God sent Him to them: and was it, as we might suppose of a man in regal power, to awe and to confound? by no means: but in gentleness and meekness.’ Irenæus; ‘For He might have come to us in His own incorruptible glory, but we could not have borne the greatness of His glory;’ which words may remind us of the passage already

quoted from Barnabas, at p. 2. (c. 5.) and of a still stronger passage in Origen: 'Who [the Word] being in the beginning with God—became flesh, that He might be comprehended by those who were not able to look at Him, in that He was the Word, and was with God, and was God.' And in another place, 'Coming down once to that which was not able to look at the dazzling brightness of His divinity, He became in a manner flesh.' Tertullian says, 'God could not have entered into conversation with men, unless He had assumed human feelings and affections, by which He could temper the greatness of His majesty, that would have been intolerable to human weakness, with a humility which might be unworthy of Him, but necessary for man.' See also Arnobius, No. 344. It will perhaps be thought, that these later writers did not carry the doctrine of Christ's divinity at all higher than it was maintained by Barnabas and Clement in the first century."

*Ignatius*, *ibid.* p. 14, 15. "11. Ignatii, Ep. ad Eph. The first Epistle of Ignatius is addressed to the Ephesians, and the title of it contains the following words: 'Ignatius—to the Church at Ephesus—which was preordained before the worlds—according to the will of the Father and of Jesus Christ our God.' The same expression of 'Jesus Christ our God' occurs in the title of the Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, p. 25.

"The Epistle begins thus: 'I approve in God of the much beloved name which ye have justly obtained, by faith and love in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Being imitators of God, having animated yourselves by the blood of God, ye have performed perfectly the congenial work.' In this passage the term *blood* obliges us to refer the annexed term *God* to Jesus Christ, who shed His blood for us. The *blood of God* is certainly a very strong



expression : but it was not unusual with the Fathers ; and seems to afford an additional confirmation of the received reading in Acts xx. 28. *feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.*"

*Justin*, *ibid.* p. 38, 39. " 26. *Justin. Dial. cum Tryph.* c. 36. p. 133. Justin begins a new line of argument with these words : ' You must allow me in the first place to quote such prophecies as I please, to prove that Christ is called God, and Lord of Hosts, and figuratively Jacob by the Holy Ghost.' He then adduces the whole of the 24th Psalm, and makes this comment upon it ; ' That Solomon is not the Lord of Hosts has been proved : but when our Christ rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, those whom God has appointed officers in heaven are commanded to open the gates of heaven, that He who is the King of Glory may enter in, and, having ascended, may sit down at the right hand of the Father, until He make His enemies His footstool. For when the officers in heaven saw him bearing an uncomely and undignified and inglorious form, they did not recognize Him, and asked, *Who is this, the King of Glory?* and the Holy Ghost answers them either in the Person of the Father or in His own, *The Lord of Hosts Himself, He is the King of Glory.*' Compare Hippolytus, No. 155.

" The next passage which he quotes is Psalm xlvii. from ver. 5. to the end, ' *God is gone up with a shout,*' &c. He makes no comment upon these words ; but we may observe, that no passage in the whole of the Old Testament contains more express mention of God, the Lord of heaven and earth, than this Psalm : and Justin applies it to Christ."

To the same purpose see many other passages, as of *Irenæus*, (*Burton, Test.* p. 61, 63, 75.) *Clemens. Alex.*

(ibid. p. 128. 148.) *Tertull.* adv. Judæos, c. ix. p. 192 (p. 167, 168.) *Tertull.* adv. Marcion. lib. ii. c. xxvii. p. 395. (p. 197.) *Hippolyt.* contra Beronem et Helicem, vol. i. p. 225. (p. 226. 246.) *Origen.* c. Celsum. lib. iv. ad fin. vol. i. p. 577. (p. 274, 5.) *Cyprian*, (p. 325.) *Dionysius Alex.* adv. Paul. Samos. (p. 368, 385.) *Concil. Antioch.* (p. 391.) *Arnob.* adv. Gentes. lib. i. p. 24. (p. 410.)

P. 129. l. 3. *The seeming paradox of a great advocate, &c.*] Bp. Horsley, Sermon xiii. Works, vol. i. p. 261. He is commenting upon our Lord's questions, and the answer of St. Peter, Matt. xvi. 13, 16. "Our Lord puts his first question in these terms: 'Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?' Then He says, 'Whom do ye say that I am?' Simon Peter answers, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.' Our Lord, in the terms of His question, asserts of Himself that He is the Son of Man: St. Peter's answer, therefore, connected with our Lord's question, amounts to this: 'Thou, who sayest rightly of Thyself that Thou art the Son of Man, art Christ, the Son of the Living God.' St. Peter therefore asserts these three things of Jesus;—that He was Christ; that He was the Son of Man; and that He was the Son of God. The Son of Man, and the Son of God, are distinct titles of the Messiah. The title of the Son of Man belongs to Him as God the Son; the title of the Son of God belongs to Him as man. The former characterizes Him as that one of the three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity which was made man; the other characterizes Him as that man which was united to the Godhead. St. Peter's confession therefore amounts to a full acknowledgment of the great mystery of godliness, *God manifest in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil*; and the truth of this faith is the rock upon which Christ promises to build his Church."

P. 135. l. 12. *Who will not give His glory to another*] This argument is said by Bp. Van Mildert, to be well maintained by Mr. Richard Mayo against Dr. Clarke. The tract “turns chiefly upon one simple argument, deduced from Scripture, namely, ‘that the Supreme Independent Being has declared, that there are *no other beings*, inferior or dependent, to whom Divine titles, attributes, or worship, do or ought to belong, or to be ascribed: and, by consequence, that the *Son of God* (to whom it is confessed that Divine titles, attributes, and worship do belong) is indeed *a distinct Person* from the Father and the Holy Ghost, *in the same essence*; but is not another *Being*, but *of one* and the same *substance* with the *Father* and the *Holy Ghost*.’ This point is enlarged upon with considerable ability; and unquestionably it is one, which, when firmly established, completely overthrows Dr. Clarke’s theory.” *Life of Waterland*, p. 54.

P. 142. l. 26. *Imitate Scripture so far as she may, in the enunciation of Scriptural truth.*] Bp. Gastrell, in his excellent “*Considerations on the Trinity*,” after mentioning how “it came to pass, that *defences* and *vindications* of the orthodox faith produced more *heresies*,” proceeds thus: “Wherefore in all such matters as these, which are too big to be grasped, we had better sit down contented with what we have firm hold of, than tire ourselves with vain endeavours to take in more. It would certainly be the truest, and the safest way, strictly to confine ourselves to *Scripture expressions*, and never speak of *supernatural things*, but in the *language of revelation*; which being the proper standard of all other words that shall be used on these occasions, it is in vain to shift the measure, when there is never another to be found which can or ought to reach farther.

“ It may, however, sometimes be necessary to change this method, and introduce *new terms* to secure the true faith against the false interpretations of such as pervert Scripture. For if heretics will make use of new expressions to contradict the received doctrine, we must have new terms to express the same truth in, in opposition to their heresy, and in this case the Church may very reasonably require her members to shew their steady continuance in the *ancient faith*, by the use of such terms as plainly infer their denial of any later erroneous inventions set up against it.” Enchiridion Theologicum, vol. i. p. 447.

#### SERMON V.

P. 162. l. 11. *Public protest of the true worshipper against false religion—of the Christian against the Law.*]

“ The original observation of a sabbath on every seventh day was a public and distinguishing characteristic of the worship of the Creator, who finished His work in six days, and rested on the seventh. This was the public character by which the worship of the true God was distinguished, that his festival returned every seventh day; and by the strict observance of this ordinance, the holy Patriarchs and the Jews their descendants made as it were a public protestation once in every week against the errors of idolatry, which instead of the true God, the Creator of the universe, paid its adoration either to the works of God—the sun and moon and other celestial bodies,—or to mere figments of the human imagination, misled by a diabolical illusion—to imaginary beings presiding over the natural elements, or the departed ghosts of deceased kings and heroes—and in the last stage of the corruption, to inanimate images, by which the supposed influences of the celestial bodies and

physical qualities of the elements were emblematically represented, and the likenesses of the deified kings supposed to be portrayed. To this protestation against heathenism, the propriety of which binds the worshippers of the true God in all ages to a weekly sabbath, it is reasonable that Christians should add a similar protestation against Judaism. It was necessary that Christians should openly separate, as it were, from the communion of the Jews, who, after their perverse rejection of our Lord, ceased to be the true Church of God: and the sanctification of the Saturday being the most visible and notorious character of the Jewish worship, it was necessary that the Christian sabbath should be transferred to some other day of the week. A change of the day being for these reasons necessary, the choice of the Apostles was directed to the first day of the week, as that on which our Lord's resurrection finished and sealed the work of our Redemption; so that in the same act by which we acknowledge the Creator, and protest against the claims of the Jews to be still the depositaries of the true Religion, we might confess the Saviour whom the Jews crucified." Bp. Horsley, Sermon XXIII. p. 11—13.

P. 166. l. 2. *Novel exposition of a solitary text.*] I take leave to extract part of a valuable note by Bp. Russell on Lay Presbyters, and the interpretation of 1 Tim. iv. 17.

"It was not till the sixteenth century that this famous text was understood to afford any authority for lay Presbyters as a standing order in the Christian Church. When Calvin's notion was first started, it puzzled many persons of great judgment and learning, who saw not at once how the distinction maintained by him between a presiding and a teaching Presbyter could be rejected or his reasoning refuted. Archbishop Whitgift, for ex-

ample, in his controversy with Cartwright, yielded the point in debate, and acknowledged that in the Primitive Church they had in every congregation certain Elders to whom the government of it was committed:—‘A gross mistake,’ says Bilson, ‘into which that learned Prelate allowed himself to fall, from not consulting with sufficient care the opinions of the ancient commentators.’

“‘It is not indeed possible,’ continues Bilson, ‘to determine with accuracy and confidence in this matter, without having recourse to the Fathers of the Church, and ascertaining what was the practice of the Christian world in the times nearest those of the Apostles. If we look into the Epistles of Ignatius, who lived in the Apostles’ days, who was made Bishop of Antioch by them, and who suffered martyrdom not long after the time of St. John, we shall find him frequently enjoining obedience to the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, but not one word of any ruling Elders. In the subsequent Fathers we find the same. So also if we look into the Canons called Apostolical, which were enacted in the several Councils held during the three first centuries, we shall there find that no class of men had then any rule in the Church besides the three Orders just mentioned. Let us examine the discipline and government of all the Churches from their very foundation down to Calvin’s days, and we shall not find among them any traces of a ruling Elder. From this unanimity in point of opinion, and this agreement in point of practice, we may most confidently conclude, that Calvin and his followers have given a wrong exposition of St. Paul’s words as addressed to Timothy. Had the institution of ruling Elders, in the modern sense of the phrase, been received in the Church, it is next to impossible but there must have been some mention made of them, at some time or

place, in the long course of fifteen hundred years. An Apostolical injunction could not have been thrown aside by all the Churches in the world, without leaving some trace of it in history, or the records of Councils.'

"He again recurs to his argument, and remarks, that if this (the conclusion of Calvin) 'were the true meaning of St. Paul's advice, and that it applied, in fact, to two distinct Orders of Presbyters, some traces of this institution would appear in the writings of the ancients. It would be strange, if lay Elders every where governed the Church under the Apostles, that no Council, no history, no Father did ever so much as name them, or remember them, or so much as conceive the words or meaning of St. Paul until the days of Calvin.'—'The first reason I have of the weakness of this place to uphold the lay Elders is, that many learned and ancient Fathers have debated and sifted the force of these words, and not one of them ever so much as surmised any such thing to be contained in this text. Chrysostom, Jerome, Ambrose, Theodoret, Primasius, Œcumenius, Theophylact, and divers others, have considered and expounded these words, and never dreamed of any lay Presbytery to be mentioned in them. If, then, the words of St. Paul stood fair and clear without this late device, as in the judgment of these learned and ancient writers they do, what reason after fifteen hundred years to entertain a new platform of governing the Church by laymen, upon a bare conceit that the words of St. Paul may sound to that effect as some imagine.'

"Having given his reason for not coming into this new interpretation of the text, he shews us in what manner Chrysostom and other writers of primitive times were wont to understand it, namely, 'that whereas in a Minister of the word, good life, good government, and

good doctrine are required; the two first are commended, but painfulness in the word is chiefly to be preferred in men of their calling; and so, not two sorts of Presbyters but two parts of the pastoral office and function, are implied in these words.”—Bilson’s *Perpetual Government of Christ’s Church*, Preface. Brett’s *Tradition necessary to interpret and explain the Holy Scriptures*, p. 91.” Note D. appended to Bishop Russell’s Sermon on the Historical Evidence for the Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy, p. 52—54.

P. 166. l. 21. *Infant Communion*, note.] See a valuable note upon this subject and on Waterland’s History of Infant Communion by Mr. Conybeare, Bampton Lecture VIII. p. 491—493. (1839.)

P. 175. l. 9. *The testimony of Ignatius, &c.*] This is one of the cases in which we are especially bound to distinguish between the *testimony* of an early writer and his *judgment*; a point to be further noticed hereafter. Our immediate subject is thus noticed by Mr. W. D. Conybeare. “The great point on which in every Epistle Ignatius most strenuously and repeatedly insists, is the necessity of a strict conformity to the discipline of the Church, and a devoted submission to Episcopal authority, which he makes to rest on the same principles with our obedience to our Lord Himself. It is needless to remark, that such passages have afforded the great reason why so many writers of the Presbyterian party have been so reluctant to admit the authenticity of these remains; and we, while it is most satisfactory to our minds to find so early a testimony in confirmation of the primitive and apostolical origin of the constitution faithfully preserved by our own Church, yet even we ourselves shall probably shrink from some of the language employed in these Epistles, as seeming excessive and overstrained. We do



trust indeed that our Episcopal authority is in and through the Lord, and most suitable for the edification of His body the Church; and we may hope that this was all that Ignatius meant to imply; but we must regret, that in the somewhat overcharged and inflated style of his rhetoric, he has too often been betrayed into expressions, which seem almost to imply a parity of authority over the Church, between its earthly superintendent, and its heavenly Head." Bampton Lecture II. p. 83, 84.

P. 181. l. 15. *It was her bounden duty so to do.*] "No man is more firmly convinced than myself of the apostolical succession of Bishops and Presbyters in the Church of Christ; and that it is the duty of every member of that Church to conform to this rule, and to submit to their spiritual authority. Yet I do not feel myself justified in saying, that without a Bishop there is no Church—that Presbyterian ordination is not valid—that without Priests episcopally ordained, the Sacraments cannot be administered, nor the Gospel preached. To decide peremptorily in such matters appears to me presumptuous and unwarrantable. To pronounce that those who depart from this rule are thereby excluded from the Christian covenant, I hold to be not only uncharitable, but impious.

"Yet it is our duty to search out the truth to the best of our ability, and to adhere firmly to that which we believe to be true, 'to prove all things—to hold fast that which is good.' If any man, in a matter of this kind, acts against his better judgment, he is guilty of sin. If from prejudice, or passion, or levity, or personal disgust, or worldly motives of any kind, he violates that order which he believes to be established by Divine authority, he offends against his own conscience; he disobeys the law of Christ. It is our part to

warn, to admonish, to reprove him. Let God be his judge.

“I know it is a wide-spread and prevailing error, especially in this part of the kingdom, to think that all sects are equally genuine branches of Christ’s Church; and that individuals are at liberty to join that communion which they like best. It cannot be too often, or too earnestly inculcated, that this is not matter of *inclination*, but of sacred *duty*,—that there is such a sin as schism,—that each man is deeply responsible to the Lord for his error, if, trusting to his own judgment, he rejects the counsel of Christ’s ministers,—still more, if, to gratify his own humour, he offends against the rule of Christ’s Church. There is no *medium* in this question. To separate is either a duty or a sin. That there *is* a Church, founded, and authorized, and spiritually governed by Christ Himself, is as true as that Christ came into the world, and suffered and rose again. That He enjoined all His disciples to preserve the unity of His Church, is equally certain. What the precise limits of this Church are, and how they are to be described in words, may perhaps be questioned. We cannot attain absolute certainty in this, any more than we can in a thousand other questions of the gravest interest to mankind. But though we may hesitate to say what is *not* a Church—we are quite sure what *is* a Church. It is a fearful thing to leave a certain for an uncertain path. Reason, and duty, and self-preservation all conspire in the conclusion, that when we know what is right, we are bound to follow it, and if we cannot reach the perfect pattern, that we are in all cases and under all circumstances to come as near to it as we can.” Bp. Copleston, Appendix to Sermon, 1838. “Who are the persons authorized to preach the Gospel?” p. 30, 31.

## SERMON VI.

P. 193. l. 17. *Absolute unconditional submission to the teaching of the Church, the fundamental principle of Catholicity*; and note i, p. 194.] It may be useful to observe how this writer (Dr. Wiseman) in England, and in the 19th century, further states and applies to practice the doctrine of the “supreme, the divine authority” of the Church.

“Now the Catholic falls in with a number of very strong passages, in which our blessed Saviour, not content with promising a continuance of His doctrines, that is to say, the continual obligation of faith upon man, also pledges Himself for their actual preservation among them. He selects a certain body of men: He invests them, not merely with great authority, but with power equal to His own; &c.” Lect. iii. p. 63.—“From the moment he (the Roman Catholic) is satisfied that Christ has appointed a succession of men, whose province it is, by aid of a supernatural assistance, to preserve inviolate those doctrines which God has delivered, from that moment, whatever these men teach is invested with that Divine authority, which he had found in Christ through the evidence of His miracles.” Ibid. p. 64.—“Where there is a supreme authority given, and man is commanded to obey it, from that command there is assuredly no retreat. And therefore the Scripture must needs be received, so as to be reconciled with the existence of a supreme authority, in matters of faith, existing in the Church.” “We, on our side, are not content with vague allusions to the authority of the Church, as a voucher for the doctrines therein taught: but believe that we have an express definition, that its authority is the rule of faith, and that all must obey and follow its guidance.”—“Our Saviour gives a divine authority to the Church; the Church with that

authority sanctions the book of Scripture." Ibid. p. 67.—  
 " But now if you will only examine, in its action, the principle which the Church admits, you will see that it is fully equal to those objects for which the rule was given: inasmuch as its necessary tendency is to bring all the opinions and understandings of men into the most perfect unity, and to the adoption of one only creed. For, the moment any Catholic doubts, not alone the principle of his faith, but any one of those doctrines which are thereon based; the moment he allows himself to call in question any of the dogmas which the Catholic Church teaches as having been handed down within her, that moment the Church conceives him to have virtually abandoned all connexion with her. For she exacts such implicit obedience, that if any member, however valuable, however he may have devoted his early talents to the illustration of her doctrines, fall away from his belief in any one point, he is cut off without reserve: and we have, in our own times, seen striking and awful instances of this fact." Ibid. p. 76, 77.

P. 194. l. 14. *However guarded the Church of Rome may be in some of her symbols, &c.*] Thus Infallibility is not *asserted* in the Bull of Pius IV. " Sacram Scripturam juxta eum sensum, quem tenuit et tenet sancta mater Ecclesia, cujus est judicare de vero sensu et interpretatione sacrarum Scripturarum, admitto, nec eam unquam nisi juxta unanimem consensum Patrum accipiam, et interpretabor." Professio Fidei Catholicæ secundum Concilium Tridentinum ex Bullâ Pii Papæ IV.

P. 195. l. 19. *Any the strongest passage which the Romanist alleges, &c.*] Dr. Wiseman's method of arguing from the texts in question, is to give an elaborate proof of the points which are the least or not at all disputed, (as, that the clause in St. Matthew xxviii. 20. " I am

with you," is a scriptural expression for "special protection," or "unto the end of the world" for "all time,") and then introduce without proof at the end the desired conclusion. See his Moorfields' Lecture IV. vol. i. p. 101—109.

P. 197. l. 5. *Adoration of whatever kind, or under what denomination soever, &c.*] I allude of course to the Romish distinctions between Image-worship and Idol-worship, between Latria, Dulia, Hyperdulia, of which it would be superfluous to say more. But I cannot forbear adding an expression of my deep regret, that we should have lately witnessed indiscreet attempts in this country to extenuate and qualify the error of the Invocation of Saints, or revive such objectionable appellations of the Blessed Virgin, as Deipara, Semper Virgo, which had happily become obsolete among the members of the Church of England. It is among the uses of Tradition, we have been lately told after Bp. Patrick, to supply us with "*pious* opinions," and as an instance, the only instance given by Bp. Patrick, or in the work to which I allude, we have the Perpetual Virginity of the Mother of our Lord, which were it true or false, would be equally and totally remote from a truth of Christianity. And as to the Invocation of Saints, or their Intercession for us, doubtless it is right on proper occasions to shew how Romish Errors from slighter deviations from the truth gradually advanced to greater impieties; but let us beware of offering apologies for the beginnings of error; and certainly it ought never to be insinuated, that the Church of England has any where favoured the doctrine of the Intercession of the Saints.

My expression in the text, "adoration offered to a *dead woman*," has, I understand, been objected to. But let it be observed, I am not speaking of the blessed

Virgin herself, but of the *worship paid to her*. Certainly we should not, and I do not, speak with flippancy or disrespect of her who was “highly favoured,” and whom “all generations shall call blessed;” but we must speak without reserve against any species of adoration paid to one who, in spite of all the fictions invented respecting her birth or her assumption in order to gloss over Idolatry, did not differ in nature from any other woman. And as the Invocation of Saints invades the Intercession of our only Mediator and Advocate, so is there nothing perhaps which tends so much as the worship of the blessed Virgin to undermine the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, and rob Him of His title to our adoration.

P. 197. note o.] Mr. Russell cites Mr. Newman, p. xii, as an authority in favour of the Infallibility of the Universal Church; but Mr. Newman, I think, has never advanced such a doctrine positively, though, like Abp. Laud, he may have spoken of it hypothetically; as in his Lecture viii. on the Prophetical Office of the Church, “since the Church is now not one, it is not infallible; since the *one* has become in one sense *many*, the full prophetic idea is not now fulfilled; and with the idea, is lost the full description, and the attribute of Infallibility in particular, *supposing that were ever included in it*.” “Higher measures of truth may be attached to a unity of jurisdiction and external order, whilst the highest of all, amounting to a continual Infallibility, *were it ever intended, &c.*” p. 239, 240. The very subject of the chapter, indeed, is not the Infallibility of the Church but her Indefectibility.

Other living writers, however, have spoken of the Infallibility of the Universal Church, as in the text; but as they are living writers, they may yet be permitted to modify their statements.

P. 198. l. 3. *As if she herself were the foundation, &c.*] Thus Dr. Wiseman, having assumed that the principle upon which the Apostles at once received the early converts into the Church, was the implicit belief of the converts in their infallible authority, proceeds to shew, that the Missionaries of Rome, and they alone, can act upon the same principle. The Protestant Missionary indeed cannot thus teach and forthwith baptize his converts. “But *they* can do it at this day, and they have done it in every age; for St. Francis Xavier, like the Apostles, converted and baptized his thousands in one day, who remained stedfast in the faith and law of Christ. And all may be so admitted at once into the Catholic Religion, who give up their belief in their own individual judgment, and adopt the principle, that whatever the Catholic Church shall teach them, must be true.” Moorfields’ Lectures, L. v. p. 131—133.

P. 205. l. 14. *Catholicity is the only test of truth.*] The expression occurs in the anonymous Preface to No. 78. of the Tracts for the Times, p. 2. “No individuals, since the Apostles, are by themselves expositors of the will of Christ; the unanimous witness of Christendom is the only, and the fully sufficient, and the really existing, guarantee of the whole revealed Faith, Catholicity is the only test of truth.”—But I do not think it will be found that the authors cited as maintaining these doctrines do really for the most part maintain them; but that, on the contrary, the extracts in this “Catena Patrum,” conveying the “testimony of writers in the later English Church to the duty of maintaining quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus traditum est,” are most of them in harmony with what is said in the text.

P. 206. l. 23. *Does Tradition constitute an integral portion of the Rule of Faith?*] That the Romanists

consider Tradition and the Scriptures together as the joint Rule of Faith is sufficiently known; and for distinct proof of the fact I refer to Bp. Marsh's Comparative view of the Churches of England and Rome, (2d Edit.) p. 22. et seq. The Church of Rome, according to the Decree concerning Scripture and Tradition made in the 4th Session of the Council of Trent, April 8, 1646, asserts, that the Christian doctrine and discipline are contained "in libris scriptis, et sine scripto traditionibus," and receives the Scriptures and Traditions with sentiments of *equal* piety and reverence, "omnes libros tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti, cum utriusque unus Deus sit auctor, nec non traditiones ipsas, tum ad Fidem tum ad Mores pertinentes, tanquam vel ore tenus a Christo, vel a Spiritu Sancto dictatas et continuâ successionem conservatas, pari pietatis affectu ac reverentiâ suscipit et veneratur." Pag. xx. ed. 1564.

The expressions, of a similar kind, employed by Protestant writers, to which I refer in Sermon I. p. 29. and in this Sermon, p. 208, 209. are to be found in the Preface to No. 78. of the Tracts for the Times, p. 2. "Considering the copiousness and value of the following extracts, (the Catena Patrum above referred to,) the doctrine maintained in them need not here be discussed. With relation to the supreme authority of inspired Scripture it stands thus:—Catholic Tradition teaches revealed truth, Scripture proves it; Scripture is the document of Faith, Tradition the witness of it; the true Creed is the Catholic interpretation of Scripture, or Scripturally proved Tradition; Scripture by itself teaches mediately and proves decisively; Tradition by itself proves negatively and teaches positively; Scripture and Tradition taken together are the joint Rule of Faith." And in Mr. Russell's Judgment of the Anglican Church, Pre-



face, p. xxxiv. "What has been said must, I think, convince every unprejudiced mind, that although holy Scripture, in the judgment of the Anglican Church, is the sole Standard, Record, and Depository of saving Truth, and *in this sense* may rightly be termed the Rule of Faith; yet that the written word, *as taught and interpreted by the Universal Church*, is to be our Guide in all matters of Religion, and that, therefore, *in this sense*, Scripture and Catholic Tradition constitute the *joint Rule*."

See also Appendix to Sermon on the Rule of Faith by Rev. H. E. Manning, 1838, p. 1, 2, 3. "The Rule of Faith is the test by which we ascertain the *character* of Revelation, the proof of the *fact* being presupposed.—And this Rule is commonly and shortly expressed in the words, Scripture and Antiquity, or Scripture and the Creed attested by Universal Tradition." That is to say, having considered the *means* "by which we are to ascertain the particular character of the Evangelical doctrines," the means being connected with "the institution of the Church and the delivery of the Holy Sacraments and Scriptures," he concludes, that "the right use of" these means "must be the test by which to distinguish truth from falsehood in matters of belief." There are similar expressions in other modern English Protestant writers; but still they call Scripture "the sole standard of doctrine," and so it is called by Mr. Manning "the one sole foundation and proof of the faith." Sermon, p. 14, and 23.

It seems to me far better to separate altogether the *authority* for doctrine from *the means* by which we are to seek the true sense of Scripture; and thus, according to the usual practice of Divines of the Church of England, to call the Scriptures simply *the Rule of Faith*, and speak

of the Church, and Reason, &c. as *subsidiary* to our use of the Scriptures. It is a question of convenience, yet not of convenience alone, because the distinction ought to be carefully made between our doctrine and that of the Church of Rome. Anciently, it is true, the Creed was called the Rule of Faith; but so also it was called  $\Gamma\epsilon\alpha\phi\eta$ , and as we now universally restrict the latter expression to the Inspired writings, we had better retain the received practice of modern times, and call the Scriptures alone the Rule of Faith. And it is in this word *Rule* that the confusion lies. The Church may perhaps be called the *guide* to faith without danger; but when the Church or Antiquity or Tradition is dignified by this use of the word *Rule*, which commonly implies *authority*, and which being used also to express the authority of Scripture, *appears* to attribute to the Church *the same kind of authority* which belongs to the Scriptures, there is then great danger lest we should confuse the two, the *presumptive authority* namely, to which alone the Church or Catholic antiquity has a claim, and the *sovereign, paramount, indisputable authority* of the sacred Scriptures.

P. 216. l. 28. *The most important monuments of the Universal and the Primitive faith contained within a narrow compass.*] Some of the most important writings referred to are few, and not voluminous, accessible often to the English reader, all of them to those who are also acquainted with the Latin language. As the English book of Common Prayer and the 39 Articles; The Scotch (Westminster) Confession of Faith; The Confessions of many of the other Reformed Churches together with the Bull of Pius IV. in the Sylloge Confessionum, (one 8vo. volume); the principal ancient Creeds, Bingham's Antiquities, vol. i. b. x. ch. iv; The Nicene and

Athanasian Creeds, with the Canons of the 4 first Councils, and the writings of several early Fathers in Dr. Routh's *Opuscula Sacra*, (2 small 8vo. volumes); the extant works of the Apostolical Fathers (one 8vo. volume) translated into English by Abp. Wake, or by Mr. Chevallier.

I am speaking of course of the most important works with reference to the attainment of Christian truth, so far as the voice of Antiquity and the consent of the Church immediately declare the truth; not of the uses of Fathers and other great Divines in other respects.

#### SERMON VII.

P. 222. l. 17. *Invectives against the exercise of Reason in matters of Religion, &c.* and note, p. 223.] The instances alluded to are such as the following; "In this way every mind creates for itself its own system; establishes as it were a heavenly kingdom of its own. Thus much to show that we do not live by argument; we are not drifted about by conclusions of reason, we are not quite at the mercy of syllogisms. Reason seems but a light which shows us the various tracks over the world's wide waste, without guiding us; and we choose our road *as we like.*" *British Critic*, No. LI. On the Study of the Evidences, p. 26.

"In like manner for the sake of a few sceptics, Christianity has been removed by the school, of which we are writing, from the old basis of faith, and founded anew on argument. Rome has tainted religion with force, Protestants with rationalism. On the one side the law of liberty has indurated into bondage; on the other belief has melted into a doubtful disputation." *ibid.* p. 48.

Not that there is nothing of truth in this crusade against the Evidences; but why apparently set Faith in opposition to Reason and Argument? And the writer, probably, does not mean to do so. Although he speaks as if he absolutely decried Reason, yet he only means by Faith that temper of mind, *not* excluding reason, by which we are disposed to confide in authority, as children, e. g. in the authority of their parents, on which he has some good remarks; but then he would have young men, and indeed all men, treated like children all their lives long.

P. 230. note. *An ingenious Essay, &c.*] I by no means adopt, indeed, the sentiments of this writer to their full extent; and in particular I think that he does great injustice both to Mr. Erskine and Mr. Abbott, by not sufficiently attending to the avowed objects of their works, and confounding incautious expressions, want of accurate knowledge, and even want of good taste, with irreverence and heresy. But as to the extracts given in the text, and others like these, the author says soberly and considerately, "So far as we see an adaptation, even though Scripture does not expressly mention it, let us praise God and be thankful; but it is one thing to trace humbly and thankfully what we surmise to be God's handy work, and so far as we think we see it, and quite another thing to propound our surmises dogmatically, not only as true, but as the substance of the revelation, the test of what is important in it, and what not; nay, of what is really part of it, and what not." p. 28.

P. 246. l. 15. *Sabellianism is even more dreaded than Tritheism.*] This remark has been objected to on the ground, that we ought not to presume to pronounce which of two errors is most to be dreaded, when they

relate to a subject so entirely beyond our capacities as the Divine Nature. The nature of the subject, however, does not prevent our judging, by Scripture, of the difference between two errors. I am no Sabellian. But I perceive that Tritheism strikes directly against the first principle of all Revelation respecting the Deity: whereas though Sabellianism does not satisfy what Scripture declares respecting the distinction between the Divine Persons, and therefore does not reach the true doctrine of the Trinity, yet it does not militate like Tritheism against *all* revelation, and consequently is not so great an error.

P. 253. l. 13. *Epistle ascribed to St. Barnabas, assuredly not inspired, &c.* and note y.] Abp. Wake, in his Introduction to the Apostolical Fathers, ch. iv. 7. 15. 27. sets down several questionable opinions as the opinions of these Fathers; yet upon examination they will all be found to have been taken from the works ascribed to Hermas alone. Abp. Wake, indeed, continually presses the point of the *extraordinary inspiration* of the Apostolical Fathers, which, were it granted, would raise their authority to the same level with that of the inspired Apostles; but it is evident upon a comparison of passages, that he did not really mean that they were assisted in their writings by an extraordinary inspiration properly so called. Compare Bp. Van Mildert, Bampton Lecture IV. p. 98.

#### SERMON VIII.

P. 265. l. 12. *Not an ancient Creed has come down to us that does not declare the belief of the Church in the Holy Ghost; not a Primitive writer, &c.*] I except, of course, some fragments of Creeds, sometimes called Creeds, but

which only give such articles of faith as were necessary to be cited for some particular occasion.

As to the earliest writers, see Epistle of *Clement* of Rome, c. 45. (Mr. Chevallier's Translation, p. 45.) "Look into the holy Scriptures, which are the true words of the Holy Ghost." c. 46. "Have we not all one God and one Christ? Is not one Spirit of grace poured out upon us all?" Compare ch. 36. where the illumination of the understanding is attributed to the Son. (ibid. p. 35.)

There is no mention of the Holy Spirit in the only extant Epistle of *Polycarp*; but in the account given in Eusebius of the Martyrdom of Polycarp, in the Letter of the Church of Smyrna, the prayer ascribed to Polycarp speaks of "the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Spirit"—and concludes—"For this and all things else I praise thee, I bless thee, with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ, thy blessed Son, with whom to thee and the Holy Ghost," [or, "to thee with Him, in the Holy Ghost,"] "be glory, both now and to all succeeding ages. Amen." (ibid. p. 160.) The Circular Epistle itself concludes, 22. "We wish you, brethren, all happiness, by living according to the rule of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; with whom, glory be to God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, for the salvation of his chosen saints: after whose example the blessed Polycarp suffered; at whose feet may we be found in the kingdom of Jesus Christ." (p. 167.)

The conclusion of the account of the Martyrdom of Ignatius is to the same effect—"in Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom and with whom, all glory and power be to the Father with the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen." (ibid. p. 146.)

*Ignatius* in the Epistle to the Ephesians, c. 8. (p. 78.)

“ They that are of the flesh cannot do the works of the Spirit; neither they that are of the Spirit the works of the flesh.”—c. 9. “ The stones of the temple of the Father, prepared for the building of God the Father, raised up on high by the engine of Jesus Christ, which is the cross, and using the Holy Ghost as the rope.” c. 18. (p. 84.) “ Our God Jesus Christ was berne in the womb of Mary, according to the dispensation of God, of the seed of David, yet by the Holy Ghost.” Epistle to Magnesians, c. 13. (p. 94.) “ In the Son and in the Father, and in the Spirit, in the Beginning and in the End.”—“ Be subject to your Bishop, and to one another, as Jesus Christ to the Father, according to the flesh; and the Apostles to Christ and to the Father, and to the Spirit.”—c. 15. “ Fare ye well in the concord of God, possessing His inseparable Spirit, which is Jesus Christ.”

Epistle to Philadelphians, Introd. (p. 112.) “ in all firmness by the Holy Spirit.”—Epistle to Smyrneans (Introd. p. 120.) “ all joy through the immaculate Spirit, and the Word of God.”—c. 13. (p. 129.) “ Be strong in the power of the Holy Ghost.”

Compare several passages in *Justin's* Apology, ch. 6. 16. 77. 85. 87. See also Epistle of *Barnabas*, c. xi. “ That we go down into the water full of sins and pollutions, but come up again, bringing forth fruit; having in our hearts the fear and hope which is in Jesus, by the Spirit.” c. xii. “ the Holy Spirit put it into the heart of Moses, &c.” c. xix. “ Thou shalt be simple in heart, and rich in the Spirit.”—“ He came not to call any with respect of persons, but whomsoever the Spirit had prepared.” (Archbishop Wake's Translation.)

P. 266. l. 1. *With this doctrine even the least instructed were expected to be familiar: “ Know ye not,” &c.]* 1 Cor. iii. 16. vi. 19. It is true that this expression, “ Know ye

not, &c." is also employed by St. Paul in speaking of truths by no means so important or elementary; "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge Angels?" (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.) It is a form of expression which he uses when he would have his disciples draw an obvious inference from a truth which he had distinctly taught them. Still it remains that he had distinctly taught them the doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit; and that it was also taught as an elementary Christian truth, is abundantly clear from the whole tenor of the Apostolical Epistles.

P. 269. l. 14. *It is one of the great and marked distinctions between the Old Testament and the New.*] In the heading of the nineteenth Psalm and others in the English authorized version, "grace" is used as Christians would employ the term for the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. David however is not speaking of the Holy Spirit. But we read the Old Testament as Christians, and forget the comparative disadvantages of members of the Old Covenant. How otherwise could it be said as it is in the following passage, that the functions of the Holy Spirit are as prominent under the old Dispensation as under the Christian? "The analogy of Scripture will nevertheless forbid us to doubt that the functions of the Holy Ghost, peculiarly so called, were as important and as prominent under the ancient as the Christian Covenant." Bp. Heber, Bampton Lecture IV. p. 238.

P. 277. l. 22. *The repeated failure of his own predictions, &c.*] See a very ingenuous and instructive account of the lapse of an intelligent man into Enthusiasm, and his recovery from it, in "Irvingism, its Rise, Progress, and Present State," by Robert Baxter, 1836.

P. 278. l. 25. *Ignorance, &c. of the Christian Community*



*still supply the Enthusiast with a plausible argument, &c.]* This topic, e. g. is largely insisted upon by Mr. Clissold in his Letter to the Archbishop of Dublin, in defence of the alleged Revelations of Emanuel Swedenborg, p. 75—86. And the only plausible argument advanced by the disciples of Mr. Irving in favour of their new Hierarchy of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, &c. is, that these Orders were appointed for the edifying of the Church “*till we all come into the unity of the faith,*” &c. Eph. iv. 11—13.

P. 285. l. 23. *What is true of one of the appointed means is true of all, &c.]* “The sacred Scriptures are not the whole of revealed Religion; and in the second place, the sacred Scriptures, taken by themselves, are not adapted to the whole of our nature. Revealed Religion includes divine institutions . . . . . an hierarchical Church; days of commemorative observance; the two Sacraments; and public worship. . . . . Holy Scripture does all for man, that a book, the best of books, can do: but is this all that can be done? The answer is obvious. It has pleased the Almighty Author, and Divine participator, of our nature, to do much more; . . . in subordination to, and furtherance of, the agency of the ever-blessed Trinity, the aggregate of Holy Scripture, and of divinely-appointed ordinances, and that alone, makes full provision for the whole of man; for his body, soul, and spirit.” (Bp. Jebb, *Life, &c.* vol. ii. p. 339.)

P. 300. notes q. s.] The passages respectively referred to are as follows, “*Je soussigné reçois, et approuve tout le contenu de la Confession de Foi des Eglises Reformées de ce Royaume, et promets d’y perseverer jusq’ à la fin, de ne rien croire ni enseigner qui ne lui soit conforme: et parceque quelques-uns contestent sur le sens du 18. Article, où il est parlé de notre*

Justification ; je declare et proteste devant Dieu que je l'entend selon le Sens reçu dans nos Eglises, aprouvé par les Synodes Nationaux, et conforme à la Parole de Dieu, qui est que notre Seigneur Jesus-Christ a été soumis à la Loi Morale et Ceremoniale, non seulement pour notre Bien mais aussi en notre Place : et que toute l'Obeissance qu'il a rendue à la Loi nous est imputée, et que notre Justification consiste non seulement en la Remission des Péchés, mais aussi en l'Imputation de sa Justice Active ; et c'est parceque m'assujettissant à la Parole de Dieu, je crois que le Fils de l'Homme est venu pour servir, et non pas qu'il a servi parce qu'il est venu ; promettant de ne me departir jamais de la doctrine reçue dans nos Eglises, et de m'assujettir aux Reglemens de nos Synodes Nationaux sur ce sujet. Synodes Nationaux des Eglises Reformées de France. Tome 1<sup>er</sup>. p. 399.

“Cæterum æternam et gratuitam hanc Electionis nostri gratiam eo vel maxime illustrat, nobisque commendat Scriptura sacra, quod porro testatur non omnes homines esse electos, sed quosdam non electos, sive in æterna Dei Electione præteritos, quos scilicet Deus ex liberrimo, justissimo, irreprehensibili, et immutabili beneplacito decrevit in communi miseria, in quam se sua culpa præcipitarunt, relinquere, nec salvifica fide et conversionis gratia donare, sed in viis suis, et sub justo judicio relictos, tandem non tantum propter infidelitatem, sed etiam cætera omnia peccata, ad declarationem justitiæ suæ damnare, et æternum punire. Atque hoc est decretum *Reprobationis*, quod Deum neutiquam peccati autorem (quod cogitatu blasphemum est) sed tremendum, irreprehensibilem, et justum judicem ac vindicem constituit.” Synod. Dordrechth. Art. xv. (Sylloge Confess. p. 375.)

Compare the following observations in the Preface to the Sylloge Confessionem, p. x. “Profuerit etiam Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ libros cum his conferre, ex qua comparatione luculentior, ut opinamur, evadet prudentia Ecclesiæ nostræ, quæ cum antiquarum Confessionum, præcipue Augustanæ, vestigiis inhæserit, et studiosa certe fuerit, ut cum aliis communionem retineret, et in offensionem quam minimam incurreret, summam tamen cautelam adhibuit, nequid durum aut facile abutendum suis imponeret, et in eo laboravit maxime, ut illud quod ex utraque parte certum sit et plane verum constanter teneret, cætera in medio relinqueret: v. gr. in difficili illa de decretis Dei circa Redemptionem hominis quæstione ita se exercuit, ut salvam et illæsam teneret liberam in homine mali et boni electionem, (sine qua neque pœnæ, neque præmiis obnoxii esse possumus, neque nostram ipsi salutem juxta Apostolum Paulum operari,) simul autem agnoscat infinitam Dei præscientiam, et gratiam ejus unice humanæ salutis efficacem, minus sollicita, quo pacto hæc inter se committantur, et suos hinc inde limites et explicationem habeant.”

THE END.



*By the same Author.*

---

**A MANUAL FOR CHRISTIANS;** designed for their Use at any time after Confirmation. Fifth Edition. Price 6*d.* or 5*s.* per dozen.

**DISCOURSES UPON SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTS AND USES OF THE HISTORICAL SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:** preached before the University of Oxford. Price 6*s.*

**CHRISTIANITY not the RELIGION EITHER OF THE BIBLE ONLY, OR OF THE CHURCH. A SERMON** preached at Maldon, July 28, 1830, at the Primary Visitation of Charles James, Lord Bishop of London. Price 1*s.*

**THE DUTY and the MEANS of PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT IMPAIRING CHRISTIAN UNITY. A SERMON,** preached at Newbury, July 23, 1838, for the Societies for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the Propagation of the Gospel. Price 6*d.*

**THE DUTY OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT. A SERMON,** preached before the University of Oxford, Nov. 11, 1838. Second Edition. Price 1*s.*

**CHURCH EXTENSION IN ENGLAND AND WALES. A SERMON,** preached at the Cathedral Church of Rochester, Sept. 22, 1839, in Aid of the Incorporated Society for Promoting the Enlargement, Building, and Repairing of Churches and Chapels. Price 6*d.*

**THE POETICAL WORKS OF JOHN MILTON,** with Notes of various Authors, principally from the Editions of Newton, Dunster, and Warton To which is prefixed, Newton's Life of Milton. 4 vols. Price 1*l.* 10*s.*















